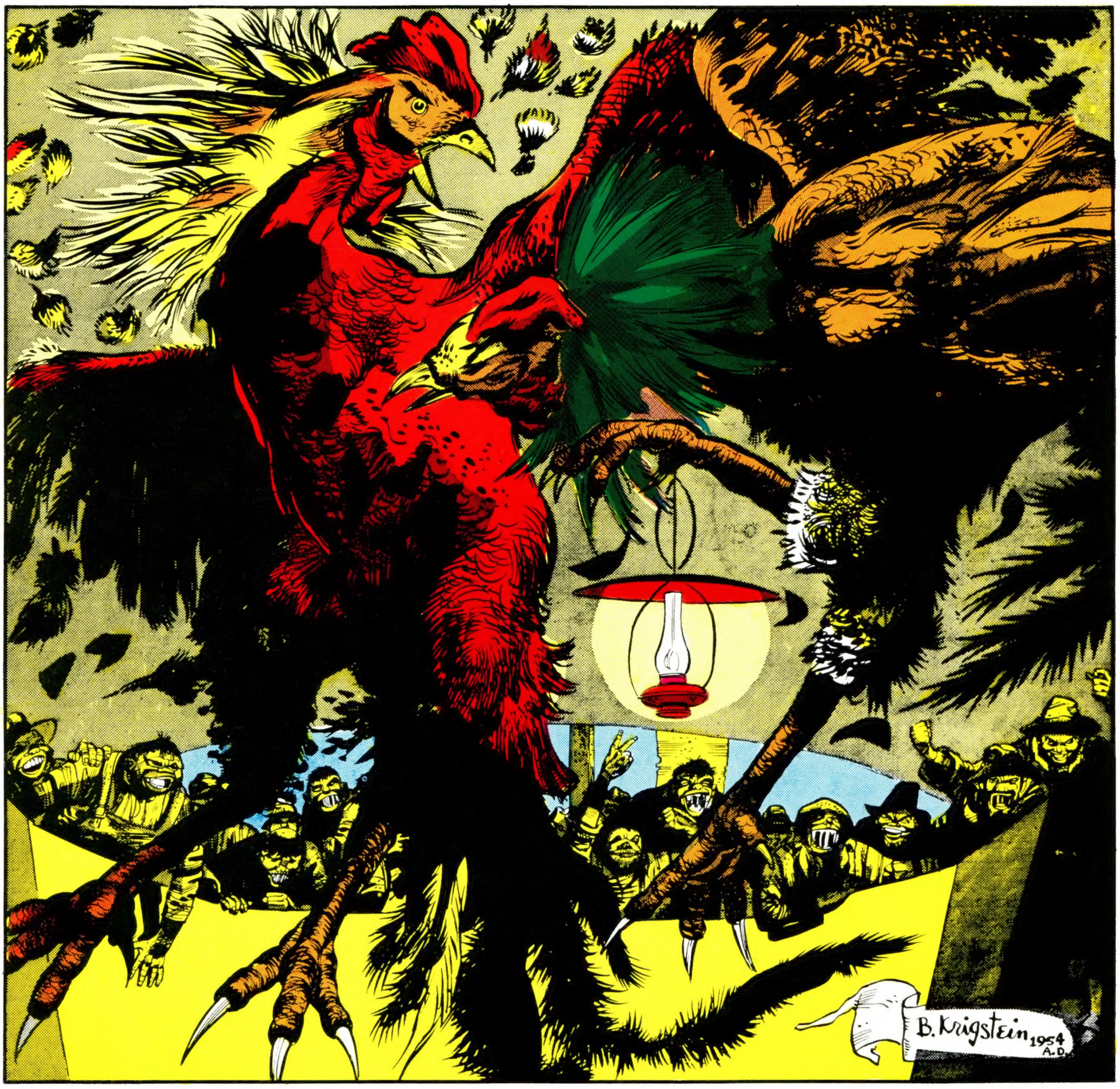
SQUA TRONT 6



SPECIAL ISSUE: BERNARD KRIGSTEIN

SQUA TRONT

no. 6

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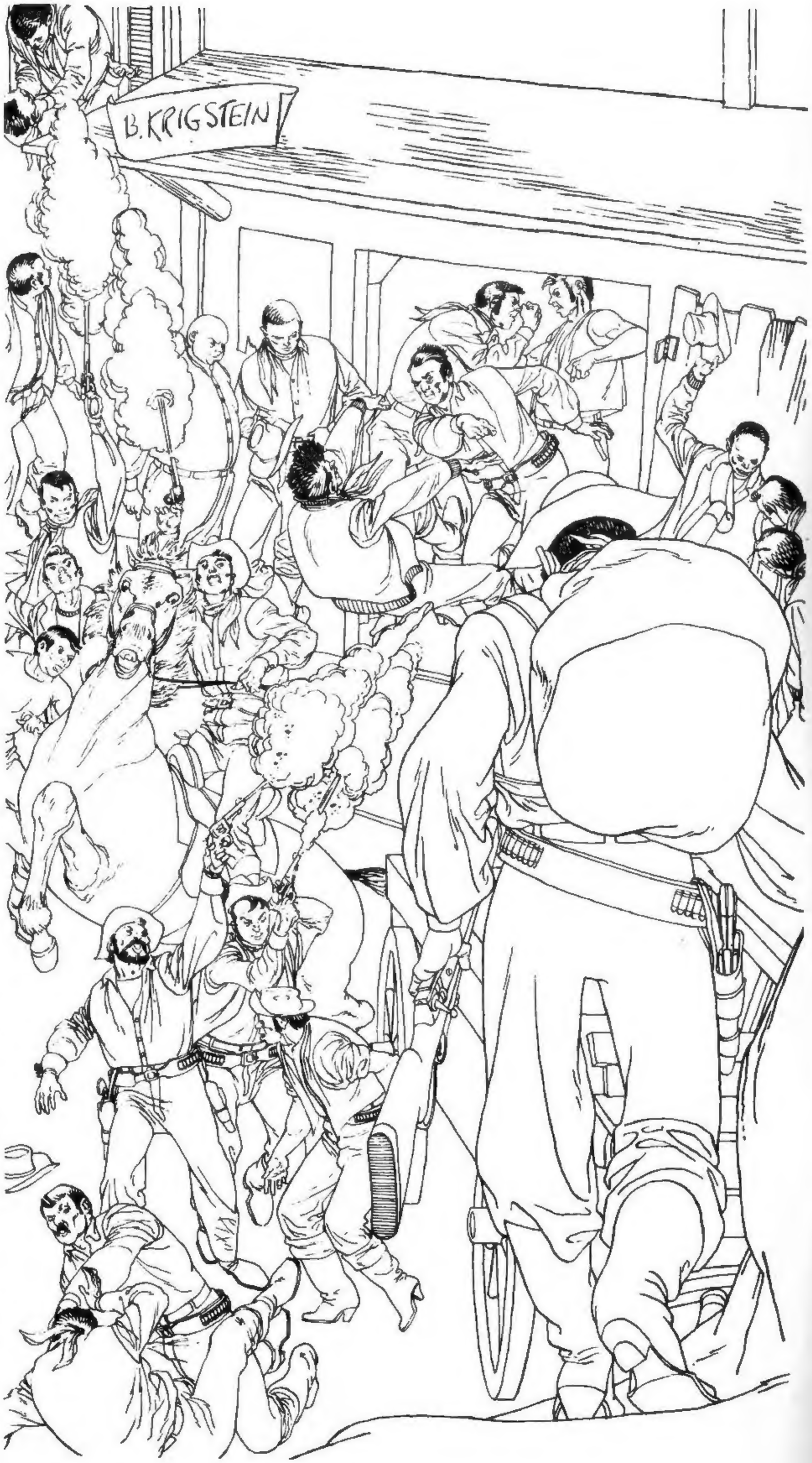

The cover is the splash panel from "The Pit." The unidentified balloonless pages scattered through the issue were originally done for Hillman Comics and were later altered by Krigstein for use as illustration samples.

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An interview with BERNARD KRIGSTEIN

STEWART: *Have you ever thought of doing a syndicated strip?*

KRIGSTEIN: I never seriously pursued the idea of syndication. It never profoundly interested me. I think the reason is that I wasn't able to find an outlet in syndicated form for the sort of things that I'd like to do. In fact, I always found comic books more interesting than syndicated material simply from a formal point of view, because of the possibilities of the form itself. It's just a matter of space. I felt that one couldn't really do anything artistically interesting, except in humor, in one daily strip or even a full weekend page. Al Capp is a marvelous example of what can be done in humor, and I think a couple of Roth's strips, too, were wonderful examples of what could be done in humor in a one page type of thing. But what I was always interested in was in extended development of a story, and the way syndication is set up it's antagonistic to that kind of idea.

STEWART: *You have no chance to experiment with layout, the way you can on a full page.*

KRIGSTEIN: Well, no . . . I think that a very good artist can experiment with layout, but what I'm discussing is extended dramatic development, and this is what really always interested me in comics—the fact that one could develop a dramatic idea, more or less like a play. And it would be kind of absurd to have a one page serial of a dramatic play appear, say, every week, and that's the same sort of inhibition that existed for me. And this is not to say I would be welcomed with open arms in the strip field; it's just that I never pushed very hard in that direction.

STEWART: *Do you feel that you have found a stronger relationship between comics and the stage than between comics and films? It seemed that you had a kind of editing technique by breaking up one panel into smaller panels for dramatic effect.*

KRIGSTEIN: Well, I love plays, and I did find an analogy between comics and plays . . . *and movies.* I didn't feel there was any real difference between a play and a movie as far as inspiration for a comic book artist was concerned. They both could equally serve as sources of inspiration, or an ideal for a cartoonist to look toward in his work. But I do want to say that the comic strip itself is a form all on its own. I don't look upon it as being sort of a foster child of the film form or a play form. It has its own dramatic problems and possibilities, although there are areas where all of these overlap, and where they are all identical.

STEWART: *We were sure that you had adapted film technique to comics when we found a panel in "In the Bag" where you had drawn the effect of the headlights of a car reflecting on a camera lens.*

IN THE BAG
THE NAME'S McLEOD... BADGE 33107¾. I'M A PLAIN-CLOTHES COP. THEY GOT ME PATROLLING THE TOUGHEST SECTION IN TOWN. IT'S A QUIET NIGHT THOUGH, AND I'M NOT COMPLAINING...'CEPT THAT THIS ICY DRIZZLE'S CHILLING ME TO THE BONE...
THE SERGEANT MIGHT AS WELL HAVE MADE MY BEAT THE MORGUE, THAT DEAD IT IS TONIGHT. THE ONLY SOUND IS THE SWISHY-HISS OF TIRES NOW AND THEN AS A LONE CAR MOVES DOWN THE SLACK, SHINY STREET...
IT'S SURE LONELY, AND I GET TO THINKING ABOUT STACEY'S JOINT AND HOW COZY HIS BAR ALWAYS IS AND HOW GOOD A SHOT WOULD FEEL WARMING MY INSIDES. I TURN THE CORNER AND HEAD FOR IT WHEN I SPOT THE LITTLE GUY EDGING DOWN THE WET SIDEWALK...
B. Krigstein
HE KINDA STUMBLES ALONG AS HE COMES TO THE BUILDINGS. HE'S WEARING ONE OF THOSE LEATHER JACKETS AND HE'S CARRYING SOMETHING...A BAG...A CANVAS BAG WITH MAYBE A BIG ROUND MELON IN IT...
I TAKE A SQUINT AT HIM AS WE PASS EACH OTHER UNDER A LAMP-POST. HE'S GOT SUNK-IN CHEEKS AND A WIDE-EYED LOOK...LIKE HE'S SCARED OF SOMETHIN'...
AND THEN I NOTICE THE BAG AGAIN... AND I SEE IT'S GOT A BIG RED RUST-COLORED STAIN ON THE BOTTOM. IT LOOKS LIKE...LIKE...LIKE DRIED BLOOD, MAYBE...
HEY! MAC! JUST A MINUTE!
© 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines.
1

KRIGSTEIN: That's definitely an occasion where it was a camera effect, but it was interchangeable with me. Sometimes I'd think in terms of a camera or a movie, and very often I'd think in terms of just a proscenium stage, really. I'd have the same focus on a number of pictures, and I definitely wanted to have the opposite effect of movement or of a camera. I desired to stop all action and make everything still and repetitious, and come back again and again, and keep repeating the effect for whatever end purpose would result. I'm fascinated by movies. But I feel that to attempt to make a movie out of a comic strip is simply to be unfaithful to movies. Really, you can not love movies as a form if you do that.

STEWART: *Who are your favorite filmmakers or your*

This is an expanded and revised version of an interview which took place on August 16, 1962 and was first published as a mimeographed monograph entitled *Bhob Stewart and John Benson Talk with B. Krigstein* in 1963. For this republication, the original tapes have been reviewed to correct any inaccuracies. The new material is primarily based on later discussions with the artist over the years. Several paragraphs have been borrowed from "B. Krigstein Interview," from *Chameleon* #5, with the permission of the editor-interviewer Erich Heinemann.

The topical references in the original interview have been retained, and all of the material that has been added pertains to the artist's work prior to 1962. The interview should therefore be read with the time frame in which it was recorded in mind. Krigstein states that in some cases his opinions have changed in the intervening 13 year period.

WELL, THIS ISN'T YOUR PROBLEM, ABEL. COME ALONG UP TO YOUR ROOM...
OKAY, SAM, I CAN'T BLAME YOU FOR WANTING TO GET RID OF THIS GHASTLY PICTURE. IF I WERE YOU I'D WRAP IT UP AND SEND IT BACK!
YES, WE'LL RETURN IT. TIE IT UP, PEPPER, WILL YOU?
NO, WAIT! I'M GOING TO HANG HIM IN THE DINING ROOM!
Elaine Cunningham
BERNARD KRIGSTEIN
HONEY! WHY DO YOU WANT TO DO THAT?
BECAUSE SOMEONE TOOK THE TROUBLE TO SEND IT TO US. SOONER OR LATER WE'LL FIND OUT WHY.
An unsold syndicate strip.

favorite films?

KRIGSTEIN: Well, my favorite films are drawn from anywhere and everywhere; American films, French films, Russian films. Some of the early Russian films like Dovzhenko and Eisenstein; particularly Dovzhenko. Some of the real old French films I just love.

STEWART: Rules of the Game?

KRIGSTEIN: *Rules of the Game;* tremendous, quite tremendous. Then there are some new things, like *L'Avventura,* that I admired very much. I felt a very great kinship for what that man was doing, and I knew exactly what was in his heart when he was doing these things . . . the marvelous leisurely ironic stillness, holding your attention on a sunset or a seascape. These are things that I felt a very great kinship with.

STEWART: L'Avventura *seems like a film you would appreciate. Just as you are conscious of the panel, Antonioni is very conscious of the picture frame, with actors moving in and out of it, at distances, and in closeup.*

KRIGSTEIN: And then there's Fellini; *Nights of Cabiria.* There's nothing spectacular about the technique of that film, and some of the others I like; it's just that they are tremendous stories. This doesn't hold true for *L'Avventura,* of course.

STEWART: *Some time ago I wrote an article analyzing your work, but I'm not sure what I said, because I haven't been able to find a copy of it.*

KRIGSTEIN: As a matter of fact, I have a copy of it. I was extremely pleased by the things you wrote, and I thought you fulfilled a very important function as a critic of the form at that time. I thought that the form was worthy of a critic, and I thought that your criticism was worthy of the form.

STEWART: *I think that I said that you built moods in your stories by a certain way that you paced. For example, there are stories that have a violent climax which intrudes on a calm mood that you have established with the art in the preceding panels. I think Hitchcock did the same thing in* Psycho, *where everything is still and quiet before the violent scenes, with slow moving camerawork and little sound, and then everything hits you with full force—Herrmann's shrieking music, quick cutting, etc. In other words, like you, he's using his medium for psychological effect.*

KRIGSTEIN: I think that I was striving to control these effects, that is, building up to dramatic climaxes and then realizing, as far as it was in my power to do so, all the emotional force of the climax. And I think I succeeded pretty well, because in groping towards something I really feel as if I stumbled upon an important way to tell stories, to break down stories. As things worked out, I wasn't able to continue. Soon after that I had to leave the field.

STEWART: *Did EC give you more freedom to . . .*

KRIGSTEIN: Yes. EC really provided the atmosphere of freedom and artistic encouragement. They allowed me to . . . allowed *all* the guys there to develop their own personal ideas. Of course there were many conflicts, as there would be in any creative organization. But the overall thing is that Bill Gaines did permit this freedom, and he did permit, as I see it, something quite wonderful to develop.

STEWART: *What are your particular favorites of your stories for EC?*

KRIGSTEIN: My one favorite was a concentration camp story . . .

STEWART: *"Master Race." We weren't able to reread that last night.*

KRIGSTEIN: I have a copy of it here. [*He brings out a file of his stories. A number of the interviewers' questions stem from looking over the file.*] In that one I think I reached a high point in developing my breakdown ideas.

STEWART: *Do you think if we went over it, that you could show us exactly what you were doing? Or do you think it speaks for itself?*

KRIGSTEIN: I think the story should speak for itself. I don't think I should point out what I think happens here. Whatever happens should happen in the viewer.

But I do want to mention that that was originally given to me as a five page story, and I persuaded Feldstein and Gaines to let me make it into an eight or nine page story. And I cut the thing apart and repasted it and relaid it out and redesigned it in order to realize my ideas of developing the breakdown of the story. I happen to be extremely proud of it; I think it's a very serious effort. And I don't know if I'm being very self-indulgent, but I think that it does something very new as far as breakdown is concerned.

By the way, they held that story for about ten months after I brought it in. I think they didn't know what to do with it. Every time I came in the office, I'd urge them to run it; I kept telling them the story had impact. I kept emphasizing that, and then when it finally came out, it was in the first issue of *Impact.* I always thought they got the title from me, the way I kept emphasizing that word. But I never asked them if that was the case.

STEWART: *This panel really captures the impression of a passing subway train. It's an artful way to do that.*

KRIGSTEIN: It's really a futuristic device.

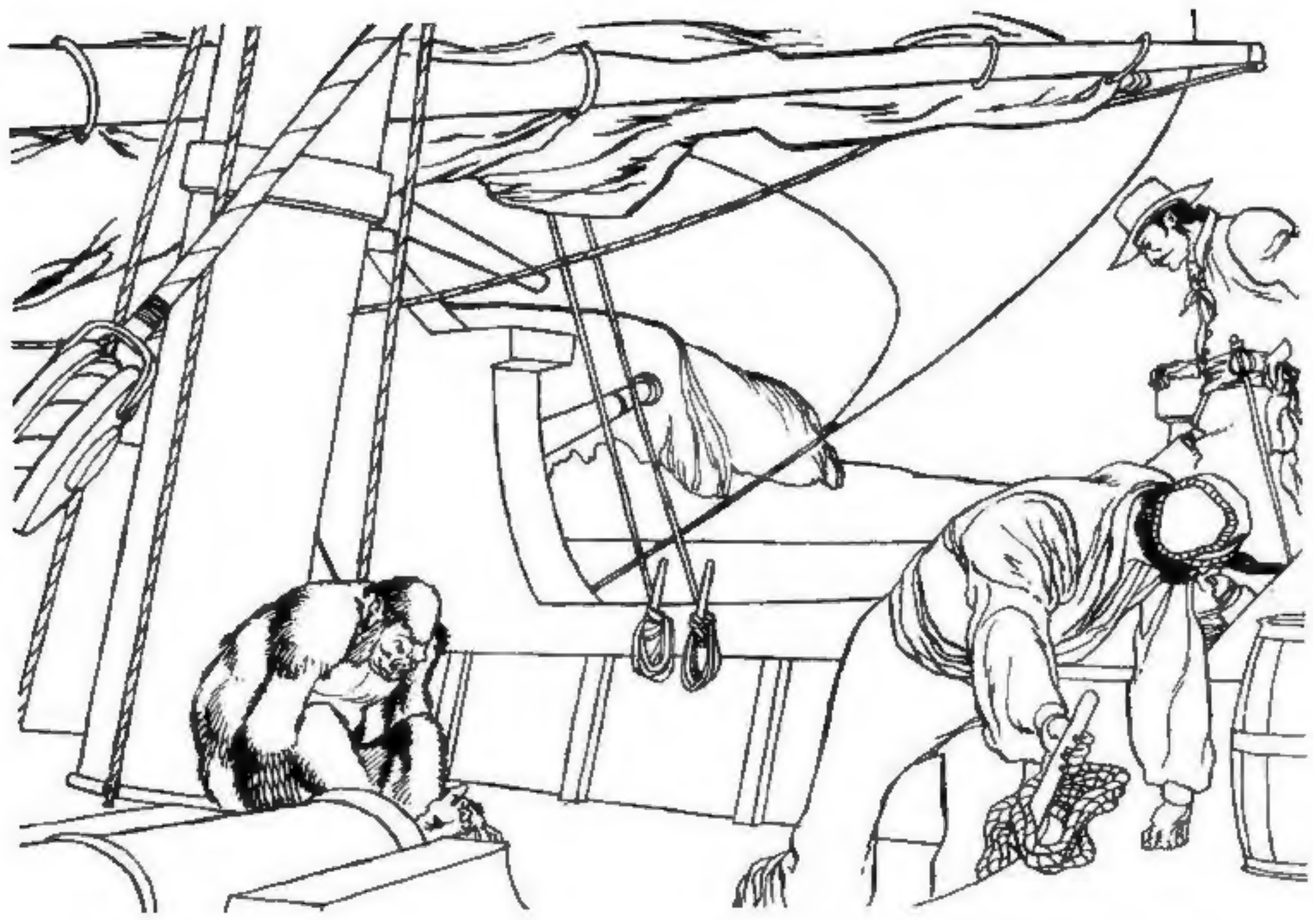
STEWART: *Like Balla.*

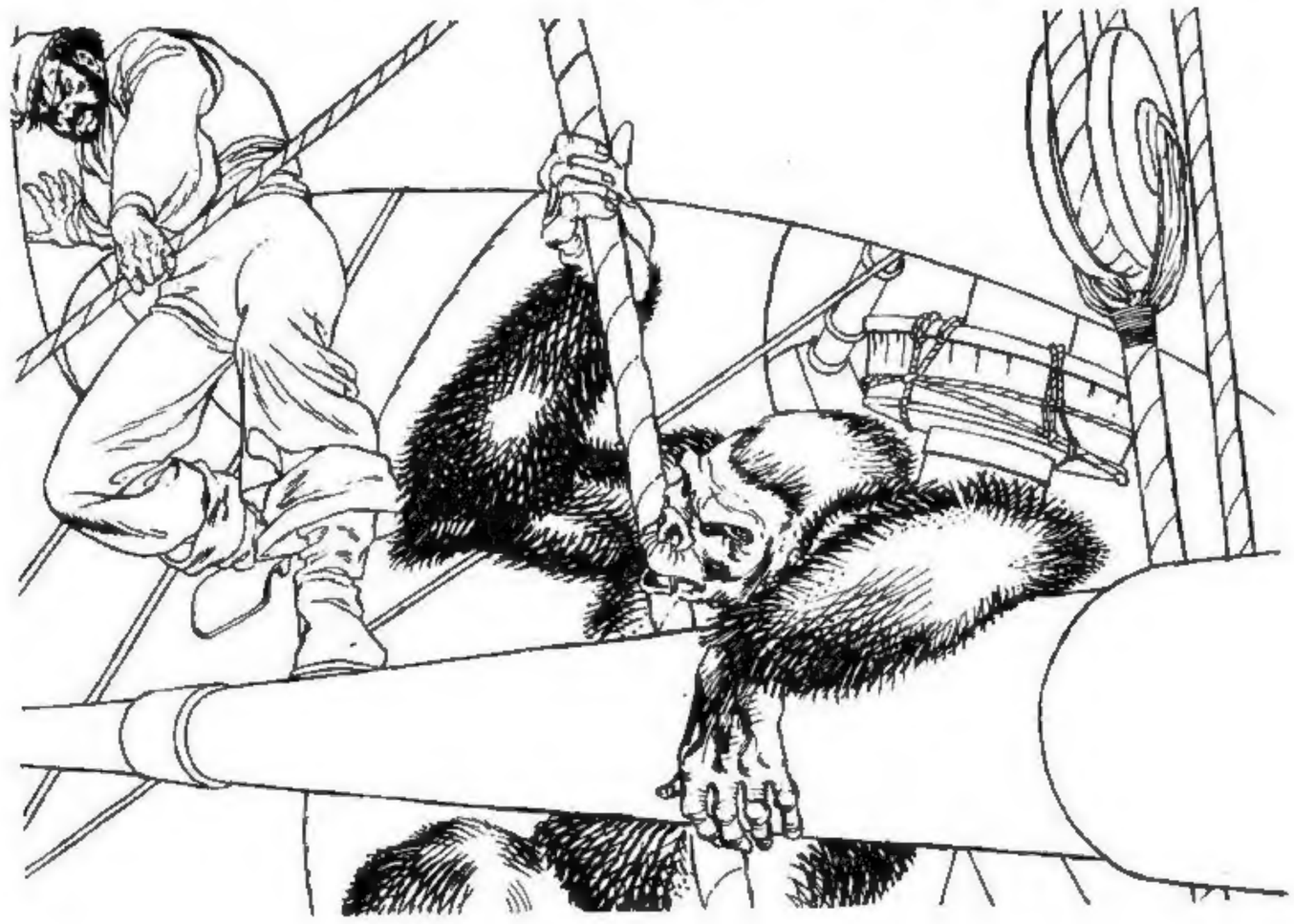
KRIGSTEIN: And Severini, and—who did "Nude Descending Staircase"?—Duchamp.

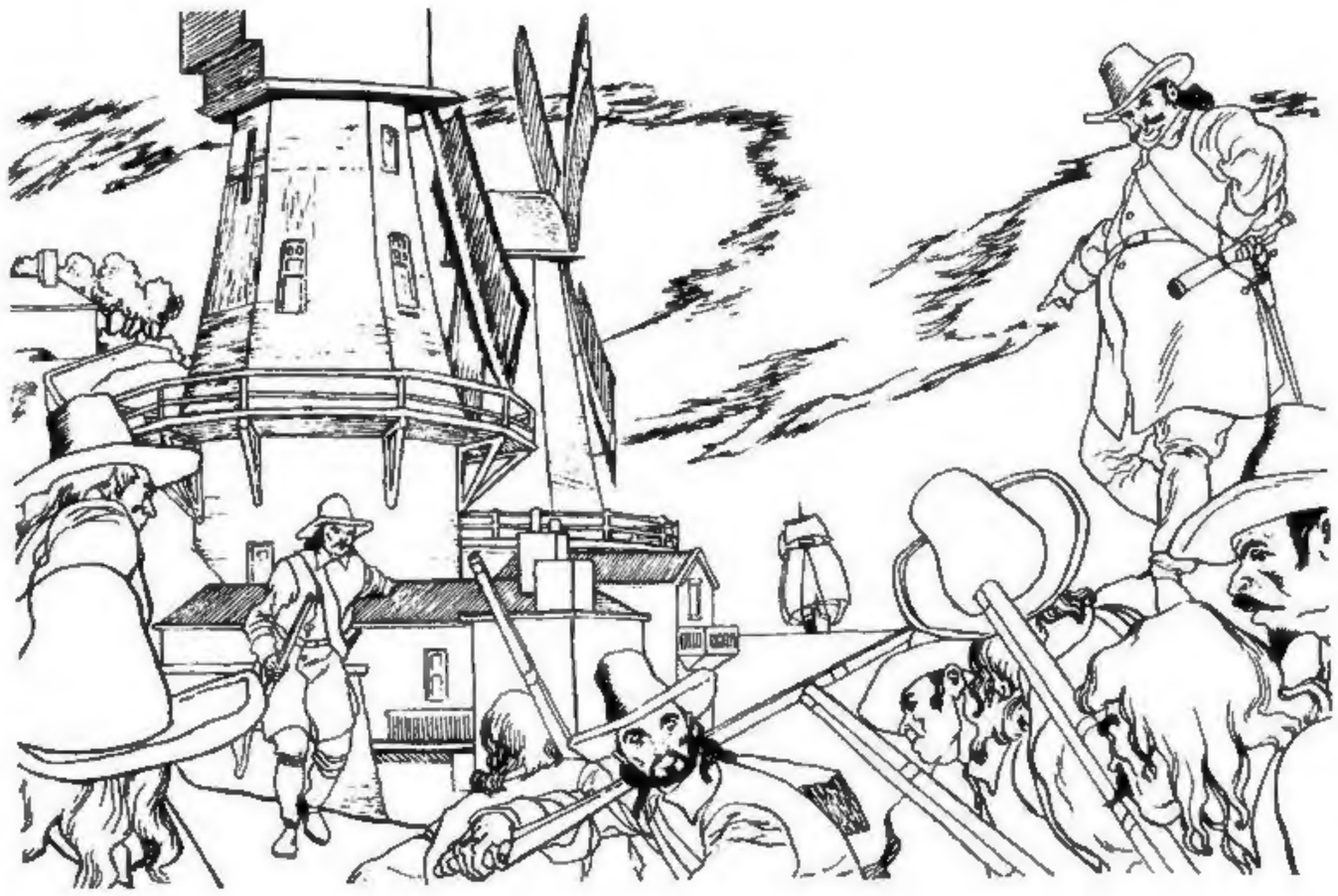
STEWART: *Have you seen George Tooker's painting of the subways?*

KRIGSTEIN: No, I haven't. I never knew he did one. I'm a great admirer of his work. I wonder if you've seen his painting called "The Sleepers"? It's a very remarkable picture.

STEWART: *Yes. In some ways it's related to a painter . . . I can't remember his name. Maybe you know his painting of a summer camp; there's a weird little guy reading a book and eyeing this almost caricatured muscular type, and a fat*







sunburned woman is walking down the boardwalk.

KRIGSTEIN: Is that Paul Cadmus?

STEWART: *Yes, that's it. I think he's terrific.*

KRIGSTEIN: Yes, he is.

BENSON: *Did you make stipulations as to how your stories were to be colored?*

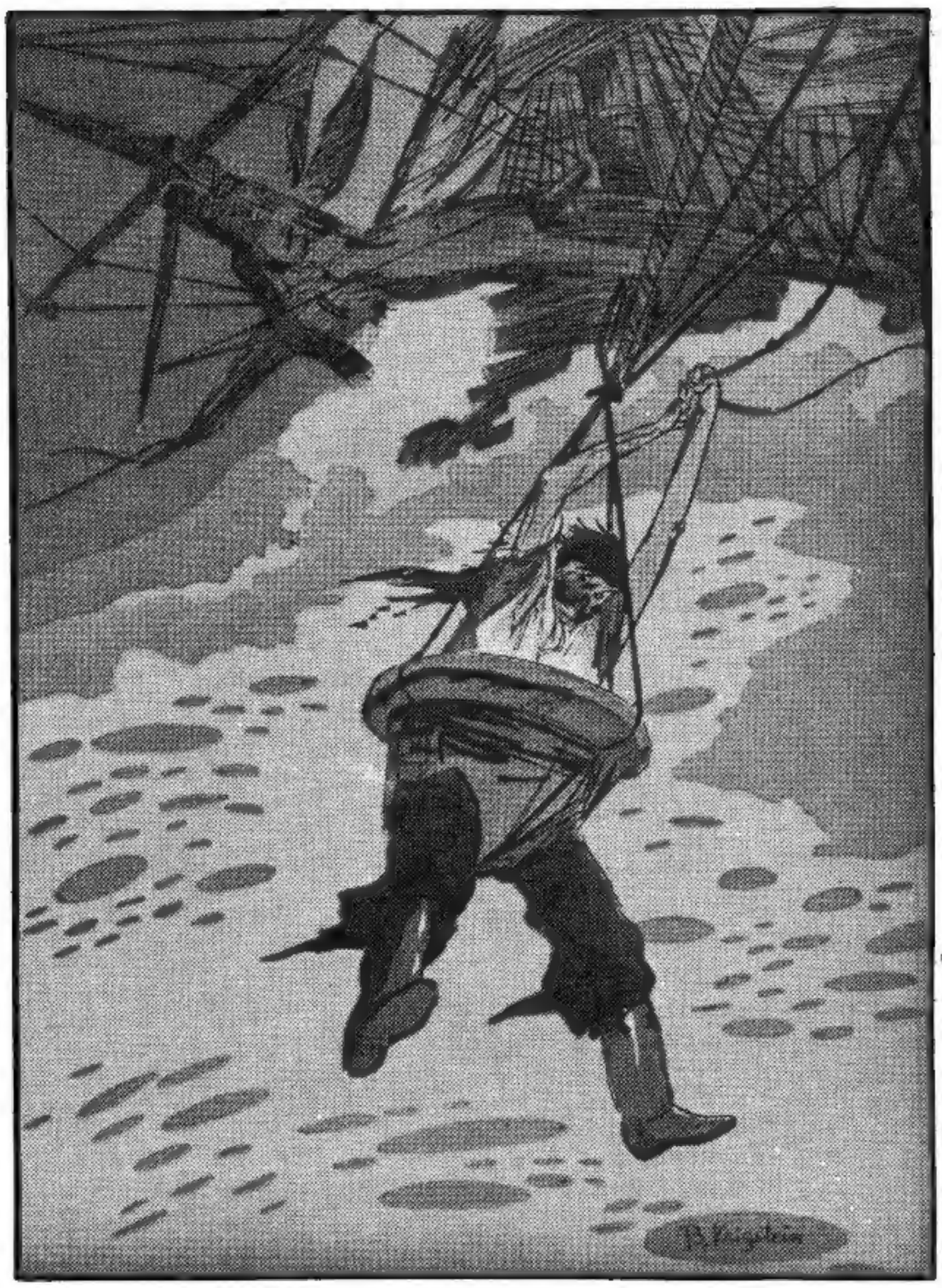
KRIGSTEIN: No. Marie Severin did a sensational job. She was a wonderful artist in her own right, and very often she should have shared a lot of credit with the artist for the way she colored the thing. There's only one fault that I found with this particular story [*"Master Race"*]. One of the characters is wearing overalls, and when she colored it she colored the strap of the overalls the same as the shirt and obscured the idea that the man was wearing overalls. And when I costume people, I always have very definite things in mind. Aside from that minor lapse . . .

STEWART: *We had the idea that you talked about what kind of colors to use, because big full panels of red seemed characteristic of your stories, like "Bellyful" and "The Pit." And this never seemed to be done with the other EC stories.*

KRIGSTEIN: I don't recall. I think that in certain panels I may have suggested something, because I know that on a particular cover we had discussed color.

BENSON: *But on that* Piracy *cover the colors blended; there were no pen and ink lines to follow.*

KRIGSTEIN: Right. In fact, I had done outlines which would disappear in reproduction as a guide in the color breakdown. I think there were two that I did like that. I recall that there was quite an argument about the one of a man adrift in a longboat. My original design called for an overpowering sun that practically filled the cover, and Feldstein insisted on the cover as it was eventually run. I thought it was a great mistake, that Feldstein's restrictive concept of realism really destroyed the psychological impact



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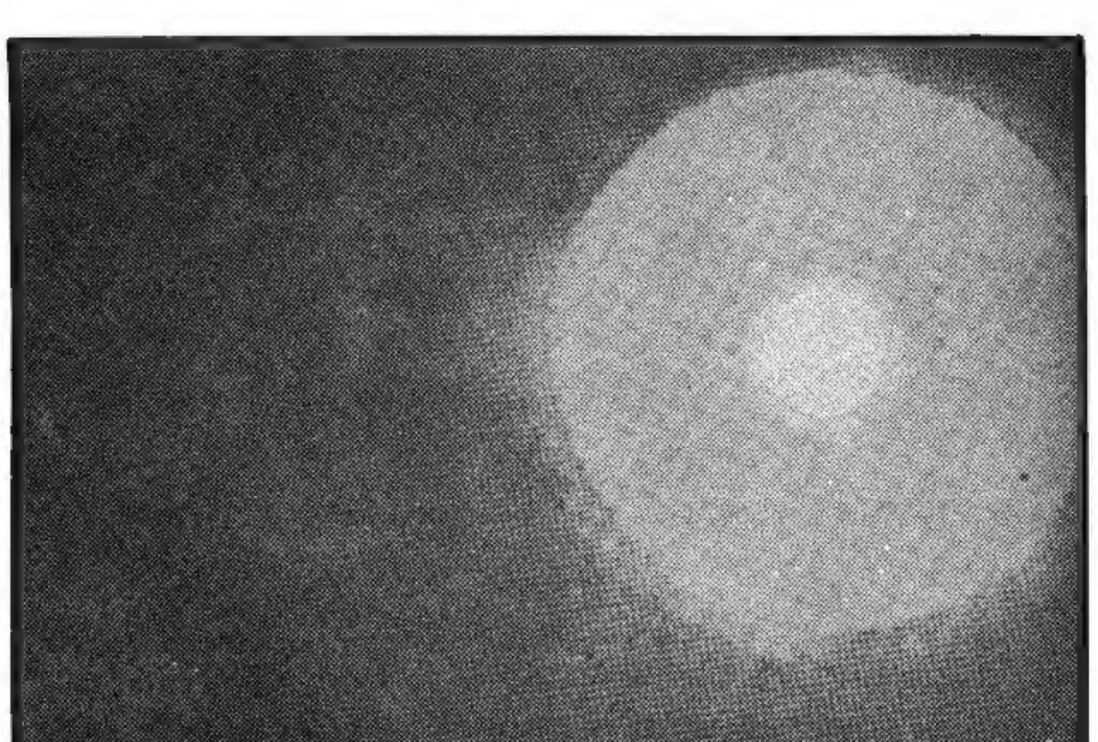


Cover illustration, Piracy No. 6. © 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines.

that was the whole purpose of the picture.

STEWART: *It also seemed that the characters in your stories were often colored as redheads.*

KRIGSTEIN: Well, perhaps that's because most of the artists would ink the hair black. But I would often merely delineate the hair, and leave that decision to the colorist. And Marie was so unused to seeing that, she would make them redheads or blondes.

STEWART: *What did you think of Jack Davis's cover illustrating "Master Race"?*

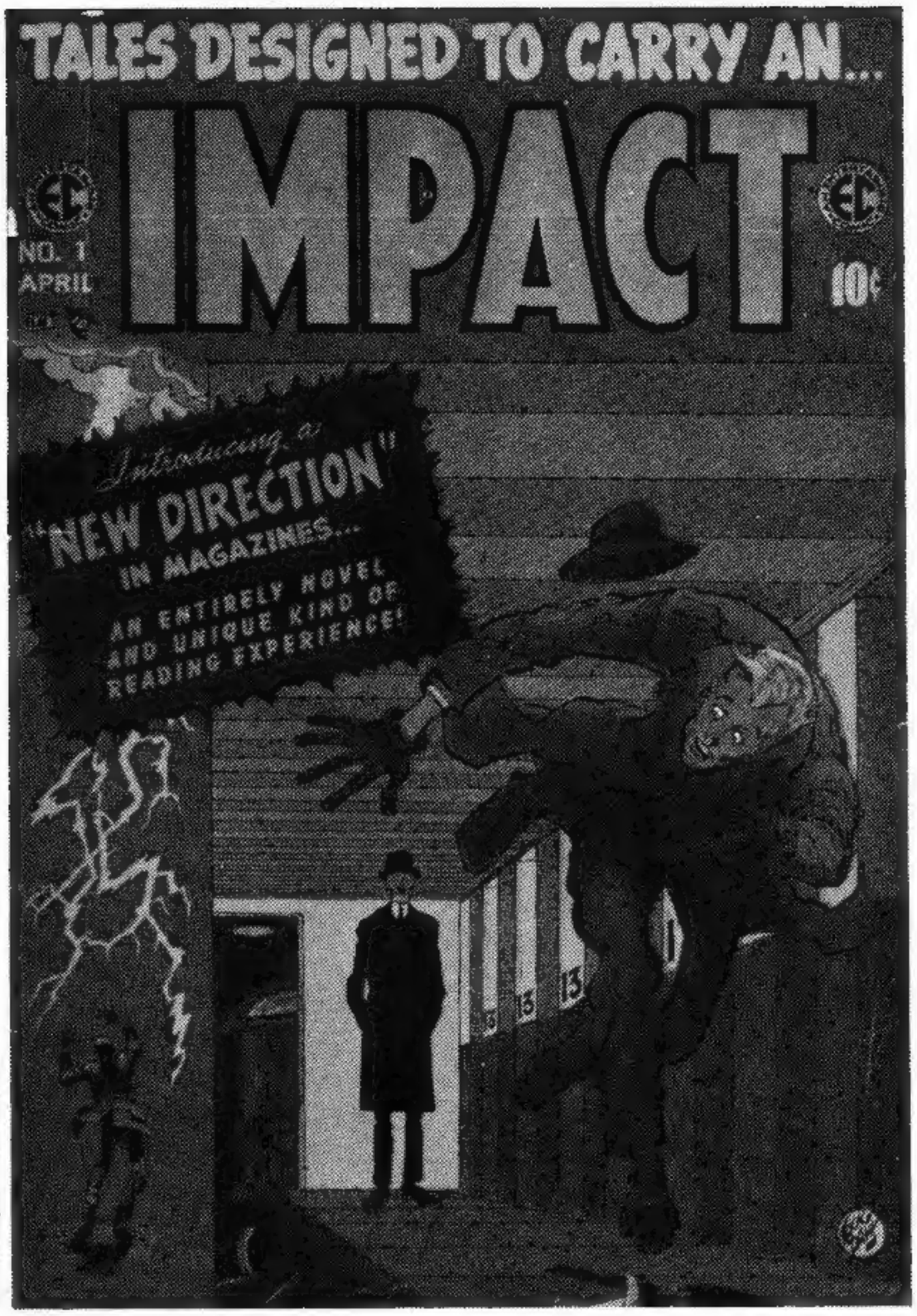
KRIGSTEIN: I was somewhat disappointed that they chose Davis to do the cover. Jack is a good artist, but the spirit of his work does not combine with mine. What I think happened in this case was that the character he created lost the seriousness of the theme of the story. He became a 'crime' character, rather than representative of an idea. Jack did a 'crime' cover. It was a wonderful cover, but not for the story. I'm not criticising Davis, because I like his work very much.

BENSON: *Did you ever do any preliminary sketches when you were doing your EC stories?*

KRIGSTEIN: For EC, no. I worked directly on the pages. I did do preliminary sketches for some book covers and record jackets. And for paintings, of course.

BENSON: *If you had had a chance, would you have wanted to cut down on a lot of Feldstein's text?*

KRIGSTEIN: No. Feldstein and I had a conflict, but it wasn't over cutting down on the text. What I wanted to do was this: I wanted to use all the text which was necessary for the literary enrichment of the story. In other words, the complexity of idea needs a complex text. But what I was fighting against all the time was that the text should be expanded at the expense of the story. What I would have



wanted to do would be to expand the story so that the pictures would take up more room. In other words, in his five page stories, I would have wanted to do that in about fifteen pages. Keep the same amount of text. This is exactly the ground that he and I went over time and time again.

BENSON: *The reason I asked is that often I felt that his text was just saying the same thing the pictures were, only not as well; merely describing the pictures.*

KRIGSTEIN: That's only because he didn't give the artist enough room to really illustrate the ideas expressed in the text and therefore the total effect was one of banality, or repetition, rather than an expansion of the original.

STEWART: *Did they know before you turned in "Master Race" that you had expanded it?*

KRIGSTEIN: Yes. What happened was that I received this five page story and read it, and it was just the most explosive story that I had ever come across in my work in the field. I called Bill up and told him that I wanted to do it as a twelve pager, and he immediately came back with, "Twelve pages, it's impossible!" And then he told me that he couldn't do it because it would be an expense to have it relettered, which was an amusing reason to give. And then I said, "You won't have to reletter it; I'll cut it up. I like the story so well, I'll cut it up and paste it down on new pages." Now this was such a ridiculous thing for any artist to do, but I felt the story was worth anything.

Finally we agreed on I forget whether it was eight or nine pages. I think that we were fighting back and forth for space, and he offered nine and then called back and said he couldn't let me have more than eight. And then, finally, while I was in the middle of the story (and nobody had seen what I was doing with it), he called me up and said, "I'm kinda worried, Bernie. I think we made a mistake. I don't think you should have expanded it at all." So I told him that it wasn't any mistake, and I convinced him that I was doing something very good with it. When I brought the pencils in, Feldstein and Bill agreed that it was well worth the expansion.

But if only—and this I felt for years afterwards—if only they would have allowed me to continue on this track. If I could have expanded the material there, I felt that I could have done very new and good things. And all these years, frankly, I have been nurturing that frustration. I've done many things since then; books, record albums, book jackets, and so on, and I've been very happy with the stuff I've been doing, but I always nurtured this feeling that something tremendous could have been done if they'd let me do it.

STEWART: *Did you have any ideas for story experiments, or . . . .*

KRIGSTEIN: Oh, yes. I kept approaching Al to give me his regular manuscripts, which I thought were terrific—he had some terrific writers working for him—and I would have wanted to re-break them down in my style. In fact, I wanted to edit a book. I wanted to devote one book to a single story.

STEWART: *I always wanted to see that done, too.*

KRIGSTEIN: And if he wouldn't give me one book, I asked him to give me, say, twelve pages—just let me expand a five page story into twelve pages and break it down in my style, because I had all these things that were seething in my mind. And then he would come back and say, "I'll give you a five page story, and you can break it down any way you want—within five pages." It was ridiculous. He wanted me to subdivide it, in other words; to take a six panel page and create a fifteen panel page. Well, that was getting a lot for your money. If you get fifteen panels on a page, that sounds like a good proposition.

Meanwhile, they were getting desperate, and they were taking their rich story material and cutting them down from seven pages to six pages to five pages. In other words, they were doing precisely the opposite of what they should have been doing! Instead of expanding and penetrating into the meat of the story, and enriching the dramatic effect, they were compressing it from the outside and were just working against themselves.

STEWART: *Where you have broken up panels, if you had been given more space, would you have made these much bigger? Would you have broken up the panels differently?*

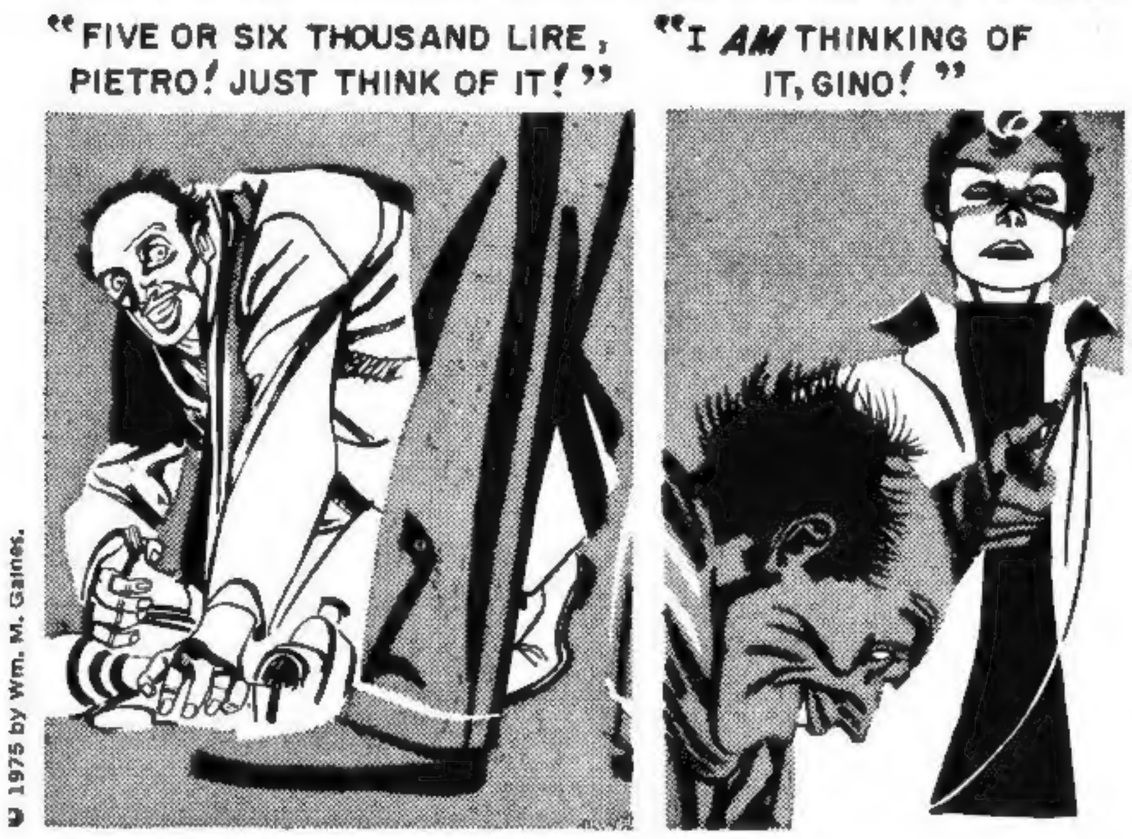
KRIGSTEIN: Not necessarily. I might have rearranged the text, and then again I might not. I might have let the captions run over three panels. But where I have three panels, I might have put in nine panels. Because it's what happens between

I STEP OUT OF THE DOORWAY AS HE PASSES ME...
HEY! DOMINICK!
HE SPINS AROUND! I'M NOT TAKIN' ANY CHANCES. I SQUEEZE THE TRIGGER, BLASTING HIS FACE AWAY IN A RED SMEAR...
"In the Bag" © 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines

these panels that's so fascinating. Look at all that dramatic action that one never gets a chance to see. It's between these panels that the fascinating stuff takes place. And unless the artist would be permitted to delve into that, the form must remain infantile.

STEWART: *In "The Catacombs," did you have to cut up any of the lettering to do this?*

KRIGSTEIN: No, that was unnecessary, because had I simply followed what was expected of me there, for example, this would have been one panel here with these two characters talking to each other. One balloon would have gone to this character and one would have gone to the second character.


NERVOUSLY, GINO BENT TO GATHER UP THE SILVER, AND AS HE DID, PIETRO SLIPPED A SWITCHKNIFE FROM HIS POCKET. HE FLICKED OPEN A LONG, SCALPEL-SHARP BLADE...
"FIVE OR SIX THOUSAND LIRE, PIETRO! JUST THINK OF IT!"
"I AM THINKING OF IT, GINO!"
© 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines.

Instead, I divided that into two panels in order to get more movement and richer dramatic feeling. In other words, I multiplied the amount of action that was going on from one panel to two.

The layout of the first page was entirely my idea. What was expected there was one large splash panel and one panel underneath. But I did not cut that up and repaste it as far as I can recollect. I remember when I spoke to Johnny Craig, who was the editor of that book, I said, "I don't want to do that splash page that you have for me. I want to split it up in a number of panels." And I made a very quick rough sketch of how I wanted it done. Johnny's first reaction was that he couldn't do it. And then he said he'd have to discuss it with Bill, and I think he did. In any case, I got the OK to do it, and it was relettered. I don't think I cut it apart, but I remember very clearly that I had difficulty being able to break it up.

"The Catacombs" was my first exciting experiment in really splitting up panels. It was the first really exciting one. And I think it was the first time I actually tried to change the pre-lettered pages, which was sort of a natural lead in for me to do it with "Master Race."

STEWART: *In a way, that first page is like a "hooker" in a film before the credits.*

KRIGSTEIN: In a way it is, but I didn't do it for that reason. It was simply greed on my part; I was merely robbing space to tell the story. I wanted panels; I was desperate for panels. And this is what they didn't give me, so, out of desperation, I began subdividing the panels. The point came where it was simply absurd to have six panels for a certain amount of text. I began to see twelve panels, 18 panels, in the same amount of text. I began to see these people doing all sorts of things, and it became just ridiculous to have them doing all this stuff in six panels.

BENSON: *But in a set of panels like this you have a tremendous amount of action, and then when the action slows down the panels get wider, square. The change of panel shape fits the mood, so wouldn't you still use these slender panels if you had been able to expand this as you wished?*

KRIGSTEIN: I certainly would use the slender panels, definitely, because it has the staccato effect. It creates a certain rhythm; even the design of it has a certain rhythm.

STEWART: *You must not have cared too much for their introduction of the story. I notice you've blacked out the Vault Keeper on your copy.*

KRIGSTEIN: As a matter of fact, I always felt that they were intrusions. I always thought those things broke the mood of the story.

STEWART: *Was that your idea in "The Catacombs" to have dialogue in quotes above the panels instead of using balloons?*

KRIGSTEIN: Yes, that's entirely my idea. But it's not entirely a new thing. As you mentioned in your own article, the *Flash Gordon* strips used them.

STEWART: *Yes, but you put them above the people who were speaking and* Flash Gordon*'s old format was just like reading illustrated stories.*

KRIGSTEIN: Right. I didn't want that effect. I wanted to integrate story and pictures and at the same time retain the identity of the pictures without having the balloon destroy the formal design.

STEWART: *That's interesting, because I have an idea that there are some comic book stories, particularly yours, that could be filmed using photomation techniques.*

KRIGSTEIN: The truth is that I've always wanted to see that story done that way. And I think that it could take a good musical accompaniment and a good narration. Or the viewer could read it, one way or the other. But I think it could stand that treatment. The story itself is strong enough.

STEWART: *I feel that "The Flying Machine" is the greatest story that has ever appeared in comic books.*

KRIGSTEIN: Thanks very much. I'm very proud of it. And I'm certainly glad that Bradbury himself wrote such a flattering letter about it. [*Bradbury's letter in WS-F #25 read, "The finest single piece of art-drawing I've seen in the comics in years. Beautiful work; I was so touched and pleased. . . ."*]

BENSON: *He's quite interested in comic strips.*

KRIGSTEIN: I realize that, and knowing that I have been interested in doing a book of his. You know, I have wanted very much to do a full length comic book.

BENSON: *I just said last night, when we were going over your stories, that it would be great to see you do a full length* Fahrenheit 451.

KRIGSTEIN: That's exactly the one I wanted to do! And I approached Ballantine about that. I spoke to his editor; I spoke to Ballantine himself. And unfortunately he nixed the idea. I've been trying to push the idea of a full length book in general, of some classic story adapted to comic book form. I wanted to do *The Red Badge of Courage.* In fact, I went so far as to break down a couple of pages, and I submitted them to Ballantine. I have those breakdowns right here. I also approached Simon and Schuster with the idea.

I feel a classic of this kind should be rendered in this form. Of course, there's a tremendous amount of prejudice against doing it. But I think that there would be a fantastic audience for it. And I think it would surprise people as to who would go for these books; quite sophisticated people.

BENSON: *When did you approach Ballantine? Was it after he had started to publish comics?*

KRIGSTEIN: I approached Ballantine long before he published comics. And after I approached him, and after I was rejected, I was amazed that he was publishing comics.

The CATACOMBS

PIETRO MIUTA...

...GRABBED THE SACK WITH ITS LOAD OF SILVER...

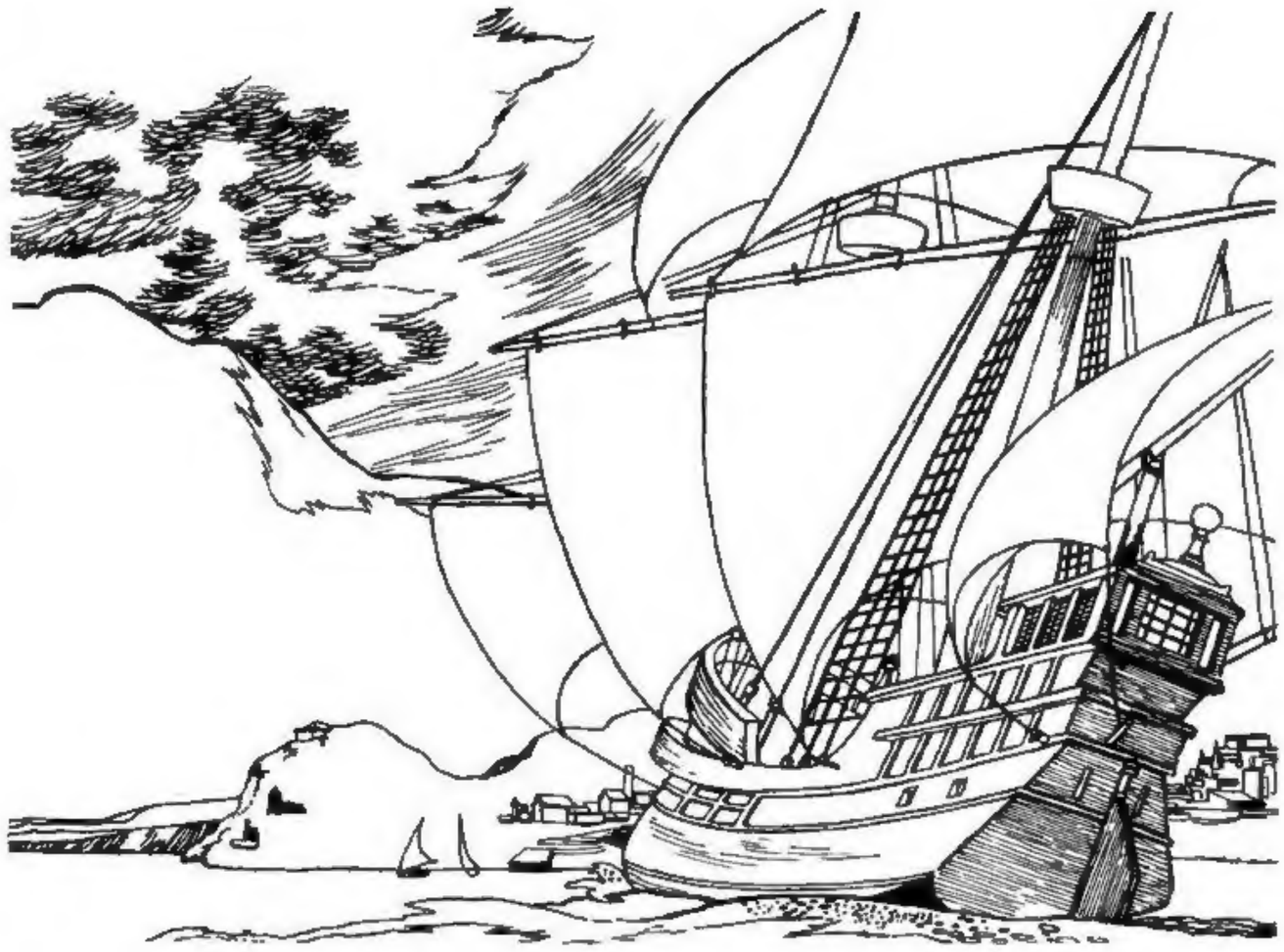
...AND, WITH GINO ALCARI FOLLOWING...

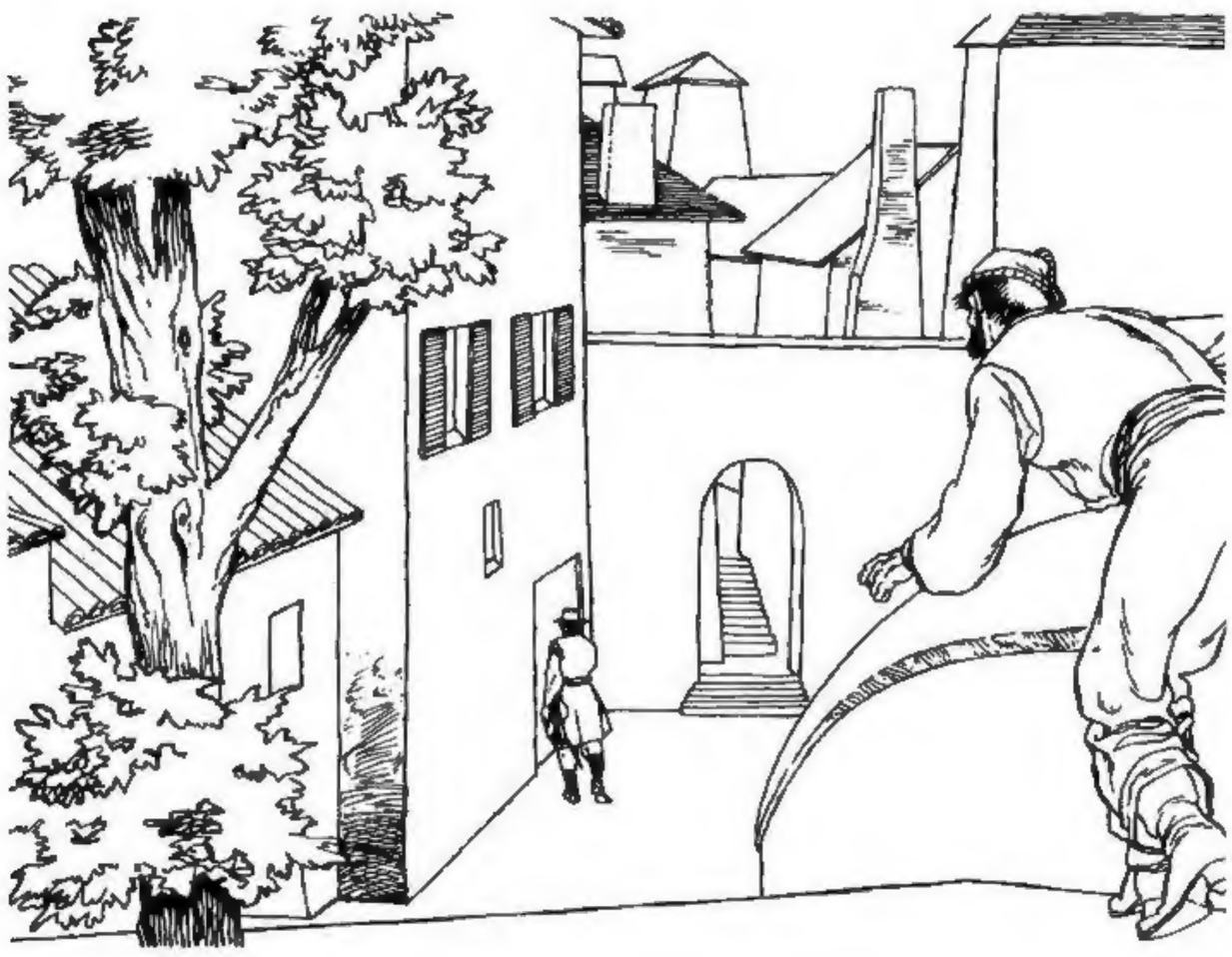
...BROKE FOR THE FRONT DOOR!

B. Krigstein

AS THE FRIGHTENED PAIR FLED DOWN THE STREET, THE STARTLED CRIES OF THE ROBBED OLD MAN SHAT - TERED THE STILLNESS, THEN DRIFTED OFF INTO THE SILENT DARKNESS...

© 1978 by Wm. M. Gaines.





STEWART: *What size or format would this be?*

KRIGSTEIN: Well, that was the least important thing, really. I would have done it in paperback form and have the work appear sideways. I could adapt it to any shape. The important thing is the continuity of the panels.

BENSON: *And you would adapt the entire novel?*

KRIGSTEIN: Yes; maybe hundreds of pages, or whatever the number of pages it would run to. But as I look at these sample breakdowns, even then I didn't do it the way I would do it now. I still didn't give enough space to the pictures. I would make it even much more pictorial in proportion to the number of words that it has here. I'd expand this passage here, where he's running desperately; I'd expand it much more. And this one passage here, where the regiment is swinging from its position, could practically be a story in itself.

I'd have broader monumental breathtaking sweeping panoramas of the armies. I'd want to convey the notion of the enormity of it and then the contrast of the microscopic things going on inside of this enormity. And I would expand these sequences in order to elaborate on the microscopic things happening to where they'd have the character of deep stories. And the whole thing would be a connection of many many stories into one huge monumental panorama. These roughs still do not convey my real approach, what I would do right now. But some parts of it I find very satisfactory anyway.

BENSON: *Actually, you'd have to excise some portions of the novel so that you could treat other portions fully the way you wanted to.*

KRIGSTEIN: Exactly. But on the other hand, while cutting out stuff from one point of view, I would insist on an open-ended expansion from an editorial point of view. It might take 100 pages; or I'd like to have the freedom to take 1,000 pages for the same amount of text. I'd like to have no limit on the amount of space for pictures. But now I'm fantasizing; what I'm saying now is pure fantasy.

That would be a monumental enormous project. It means that every single one of these panels has to be a picture, a real picture, without compromising. I couldn't rely that much on close-ups, either. I'd make it much more pictorial.

BENSON: *It's interesting that your Hillman work is much more pictorial and has fewer close-ups than your EC work.*

KRIGSTEIN: But if you eliminated the close-ups in the EC material, what would remain would be the pictorial Hillman style. In other words, the close-ups were in addition to the pictorial element. I started out pictorially; that was really my main interest. And I became deeply interested in the connections, using close-ups to connect these pictorial elements, and so I expanded that aspect of it.

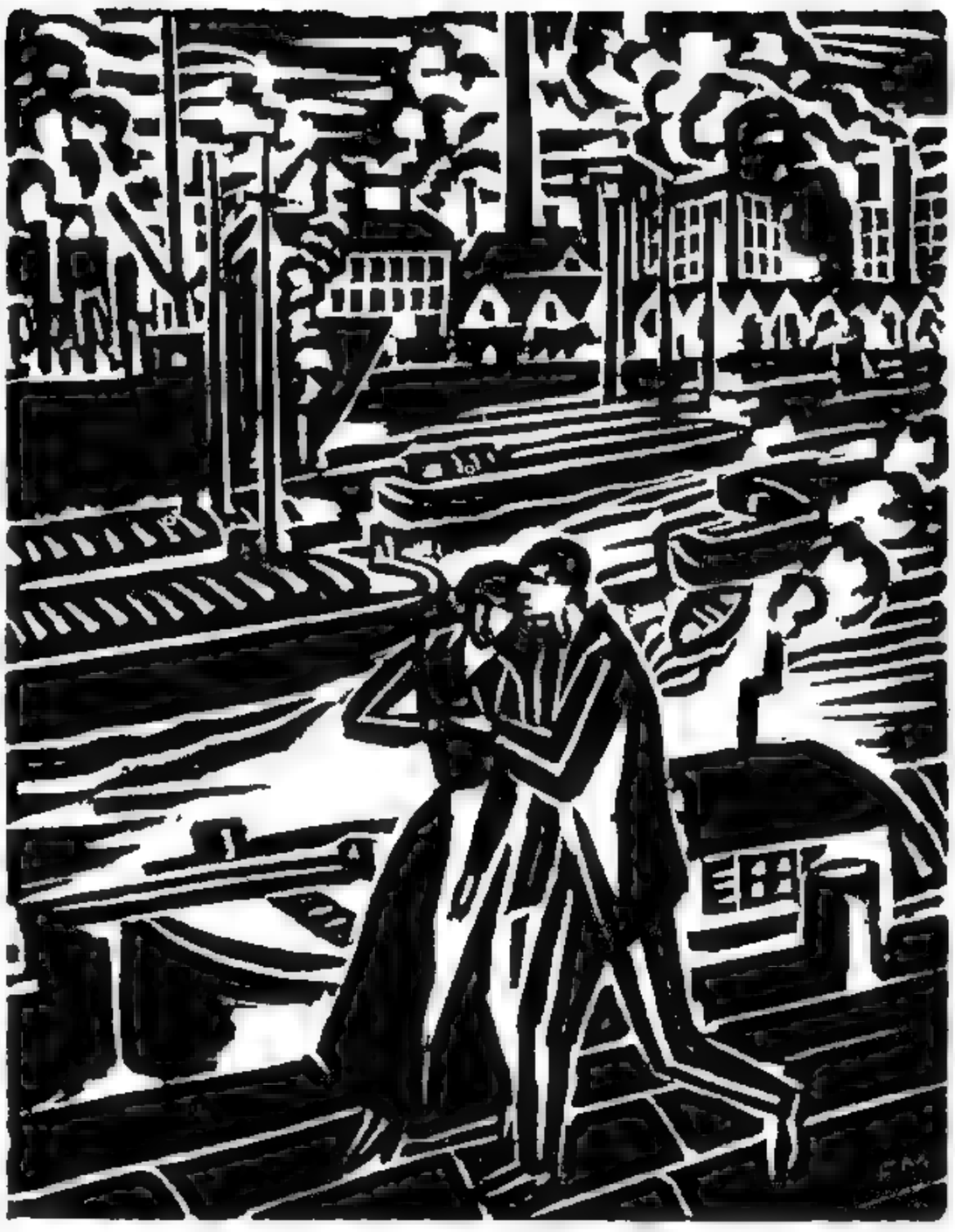
If I would go back to work, and if I had the most ideal conditions and unlimited time, I would now expand the pictorial thing, and add that still further. In my mind's eye, I just see a very monumentally expanded kind of pictorial thing. But you know, I'm just dreaming.

Masereel I think attempted this huge pictorial approach. And I'm thinking of Gustave Doré, too, where every one of his illustrations was tremendous.

BENSON: *What did you think of John Huston's film of* The Red Badge of Courage*?*

KRIGSTEIN: I liked it. It was much better than one could expect at that time from anybody else. But I still thought it wasn't the definitive movie of that story. It was not.

Here's a breakdown I did of a section of *Treasure Island* for Harvey at EC, and it almost went through. I had talked to Harvey about my idea of doing classics, and he had asked me to do a breakdown, to see what I had in mind, and I went ahead and broke down this section of *Treasure Island.* Jerry DeFuccio said that he had a copy of the book which he would lend me, and I told him that I would mark it up, which I did. I took a section of it, and I marked out passages of dialogue and



From Passionate Journey by Frans Masereel. © 1948 by Lear Publishers, Inc.

description. And I numbered each one in sequence so that simply by looking at that book and the way it was marked up, one could see the way I broke it down. And I gave that book back to Jerry, which I really wish I hadn't done. But this is my rough break down of that. The art itself is indicated in a most elementary manner, but I think the words are all there.

BENSON: *I notice that you have a lot of captions here. Did you feel in any way intimidated into leaving the words . . .*

KRIGSTEIN: I didn't use all the words in the book. The breakdown is not fully resolved; the sequence is there and the words that I would employ have been kept. But within this form I would break it down and refine it still further. This is just a first draft.

By the way, here's a manuscript of something I've written within the past year.

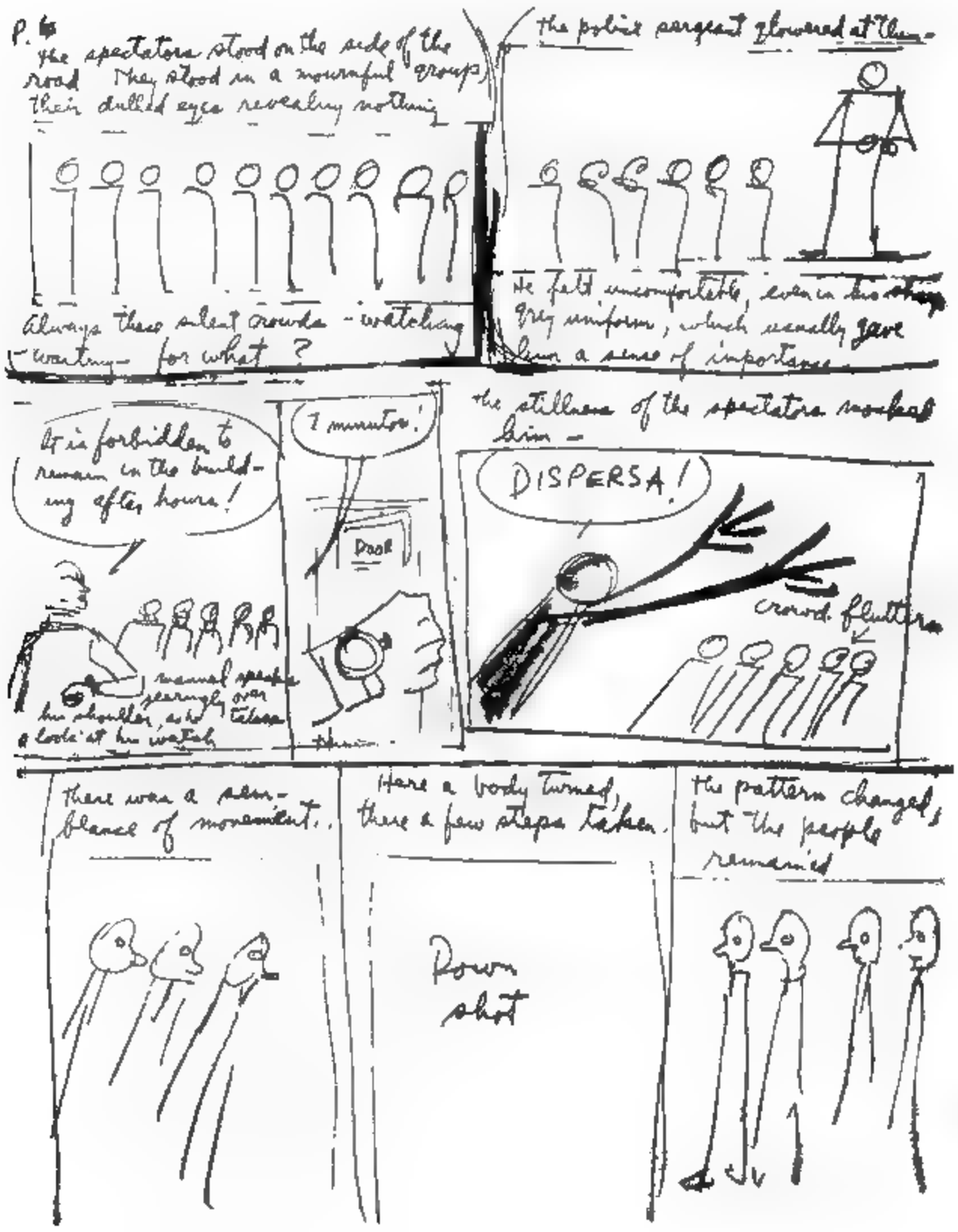
STEWART: *"The Most Popular Movie in the World"; that's a terrific title. Is this a script for a comic book?*

KRIGSTEIN: There's no reason why it couldn't be used in any form; a comic book, a live action film, or an animated cartoon. I even thought of it as a play, if I could get people interested in producing it. I will say that it's been rejected by every publisher I've sent it to. I sent it to Harvey Kurtzman, incidentally, when *Help* was going strong. Lyle Stuart turned it down too.

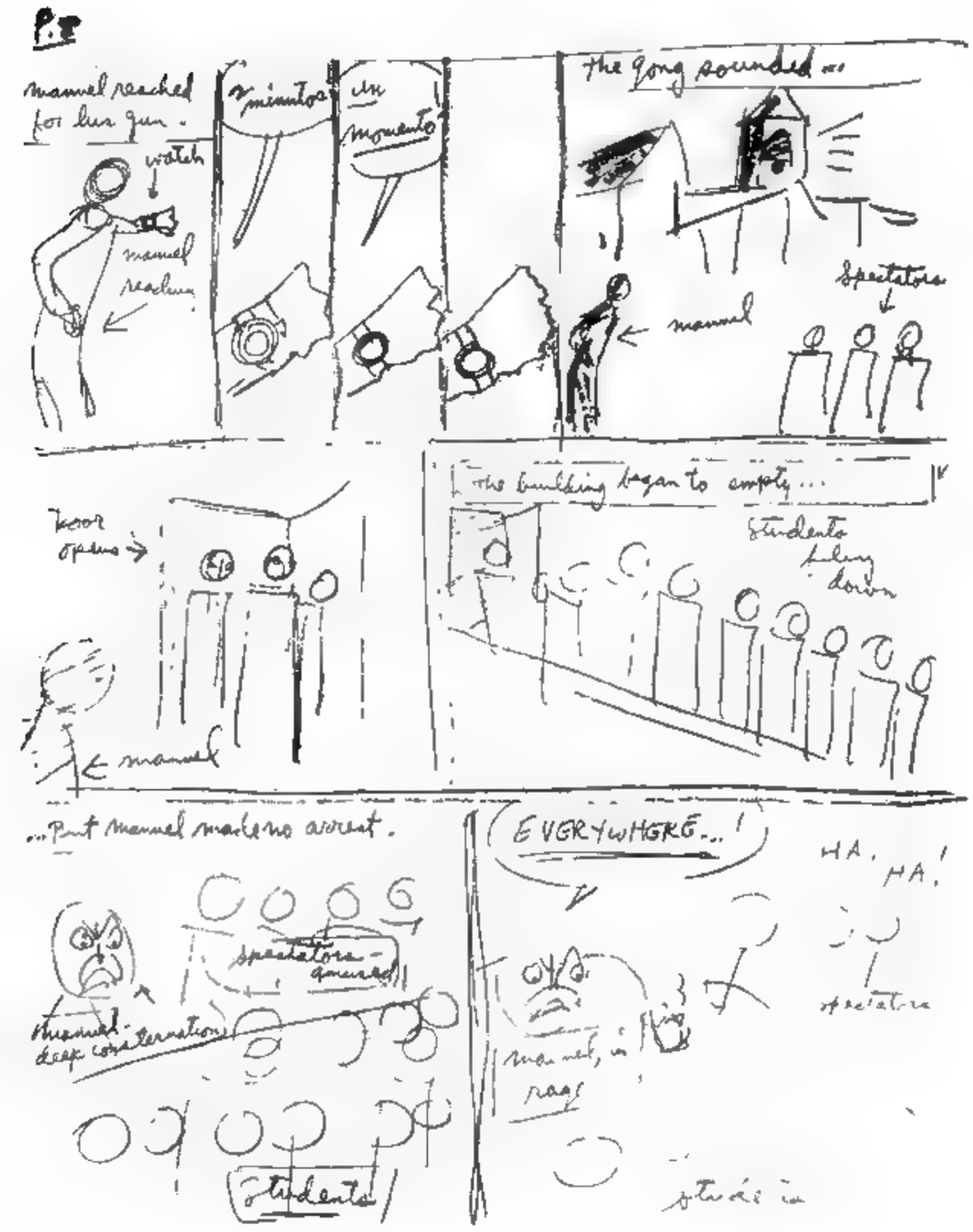
By the way, here's my breakdown of a story, "A Man of Importance," that Lyle Stuart wrote for me during the latter days of my stay at EC. I don't know if this is a first version or what; it's totally crude.

I also wanted very much to do parts of *War and Peace* by Tolstoy. I showed Harvey these breakdowns for that, back when we were at EC. It could very well have fit into his format, but he didn't want it at that time. I think this is a pretty clear breakdown of how I would have done it. It was a favorite project of mine.

BENSON: *Which part of* War and Peace *is this?*


P. 6
the spectators stood on the side of the road. They stood in a mournful group. Their dulled eyes revealing nothing
the police sergeant glowered at them
Always these silent crowds - watching - waiting - for what ?
He felt uncomfortable, even in his grey uniform, which usually gave him a sense of importance
It is forbidden to remain in the building after hours!
1 minutes!
the stillness of the spectators mocked him -
DISPERSA!
Door
crowd flutters
manuel speaks jokingly over his shoulder, as he takes a look at his watch
There was a semblance of movement.
Here a body turned, there a few steps taken.
Down shot
the pattern changed, but the people remained

P.7
Manuel knew he couldn't desert his position on the stone steps to chase them.
I will trap my man - the chap with the one shot mauser!
It was the silence that disturbed him ...
the cold, sullen silence ..
5 minutes ...
DOOR
He shielded his eyes from the sun ...
4 minutes
.. and studied the University building. Inside the classrooms the young men were preparing to vacate the building. And he was on there own with them ...
3 minutes!


P.8
manuel reached for his gun.
watch
manuel reaches
manuel
2 minutes
1 minute
the gong sounded ...
spectators
manuel
the building began to empty ...
students filing down
door opens
manuel
...But manuel makes no arrest.
EVERYWHERE ...!
HA. HA!
spectators amused
manuel deep conversation
students
manuel, in rage
students

P.9
ALL OF THEM ...!
SPIT SPUTTER
HA HA HA!
spectators laughing louder
manuel fuming
..DISRESPECT..
manuel
SPUTTER SPIT SPIT
D-DISRESPECT FOR AUTHORITY!!!
HA! HA! HA! HA!
spectators
manuel
students
The two hundred students filed slowly, silently, past him ...
HA! HA! HA! HA
HO! HO! HAR! HAR!
(HEH!)
All of them! Everywhere! all of them!
spectators rock with laughter
manuel, raging
Students march by unpreceively

KRIGSTEIN: That is the wolf hunt. I really regret I wasn't able to do that. It could be something quite interesting. I really feel it's a tragic thing that there's tremendous prejudice against rendering a great classic in this form.

BENSON: *Perhaps that's because people immediately think of* Classics Illustrated.

KRIGSTEIN: Well, that's a pity.

STEWART: *You've never done a* Classics Illustrated, *have you?*

KRIGSTEIN: No. But I almost did something for them. It just never went through. I spoke to the editor, who was then Len Cole, and we almost got together on something. But I was not too comfortable about the situation and I just never called back. The funny thing was that Len Cole had this office with somebody else, and this somebody else was the publisher's son or somebody, and he had his ear sticking out all during the conversation I was having with Len Cole, and the atmosphere was so suspicious and unsavory that I just gave up the idea. I didn't know what the hell was going on.

STEWART: *Now that Dell is doing . . .*

KRIGSTEIN: I did a book for Dell recently, by the way; *87th Precinct.* That's an interesting story, too. Len Cole was editor at the time. I received a manuscript of 32 pages, and it was the most fantastically absurd story that has ever been typed or presented to an artist for a breakdown. So I treated it as such; I treated it as a perfectly absurd and idiotic story and I did an idiotic story out of it, and I thought that somebody would get the message up there. I was amazed because they liked it and they printed it. They printed the thing! And finally I got a second manuscript from the same series. I thought that perhaps this time I'd see certain changes there. And lo and behold the second one was even stupider than the first one. I really never read anything so idiotic in my life. I called them back and said I couldn't do it, and told them what I'd have to do to change it and so on. And he took back the manuscript and held it for a couple of weeks and then he sent it back to me, and I think they had changed about three words in the thing. And I was so upset about it and spoke to the writers up there, and finally I sent the manuscript back. I couldn't do it. I've never seen anything so fantastic in my life.

STEWART: *"Just as I suspected, Myra, howling dogs and dead men always go together." "A long, thin, and very sharp instrument to the heart, and the heart beats no more." I see what you mean immediately about it being an absurd story. How do you mean that you treated it absurdly?*

KRIGSTEIN: Well, I just did exactly what the writer called for, and I can't think of anything funnier than that.

STEWART: *These were his descriptions of this panel?*

KRIGSTEIN: More or less, yes. As he'd go on, I kind of exaggerated a little bit what the writer required, to heighten the . . .

STEWART: *He wanted these big gigantic pictures hanging on the wall?*

KRIGSTEIN: Yes. Can you imagine him seriously saying that howling dogs and dead men go together?

STEWART: *It's got about three pages straight of people just talking. And he wanted this full page panel?*

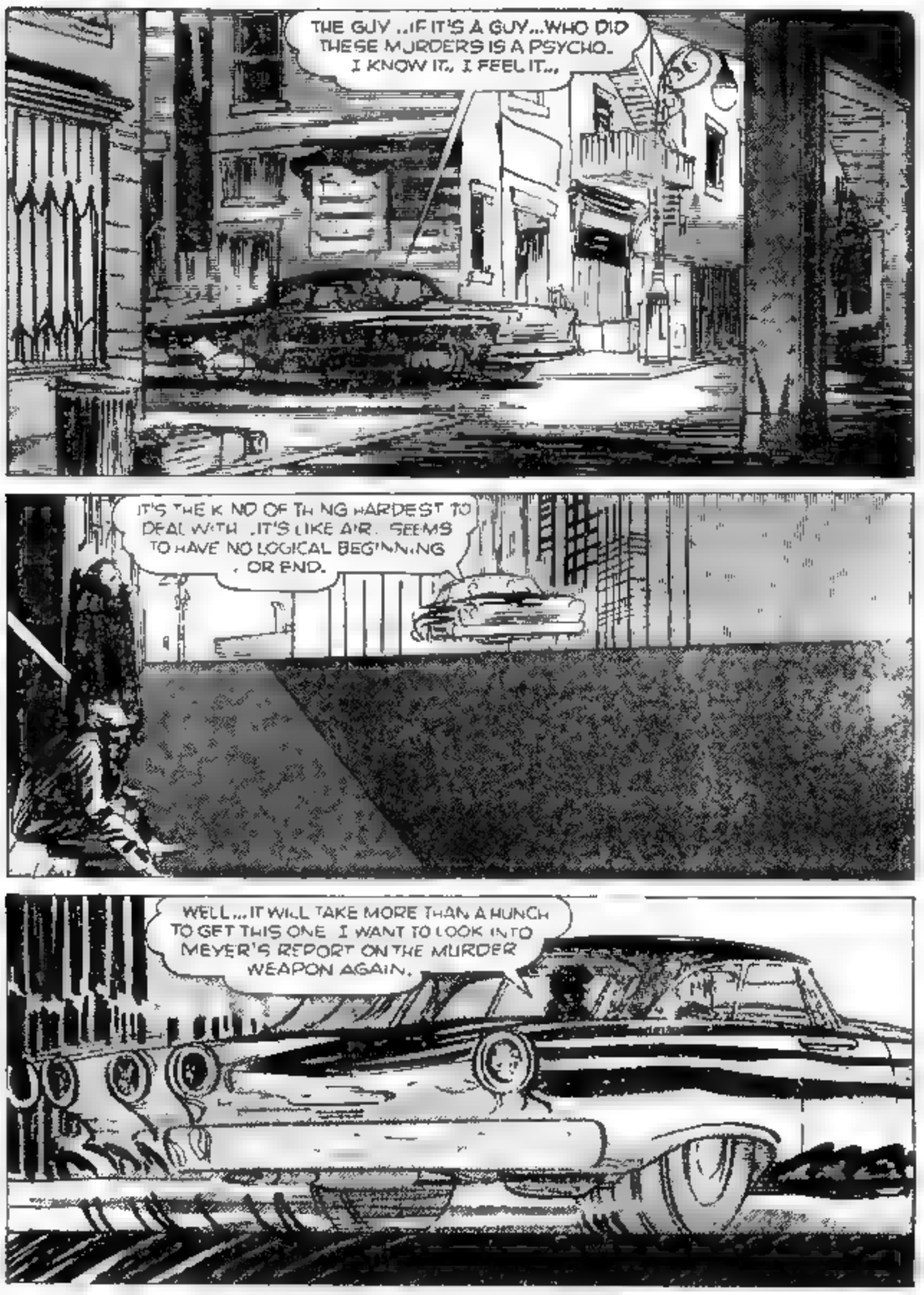
KRIGSTEIN: Yes.

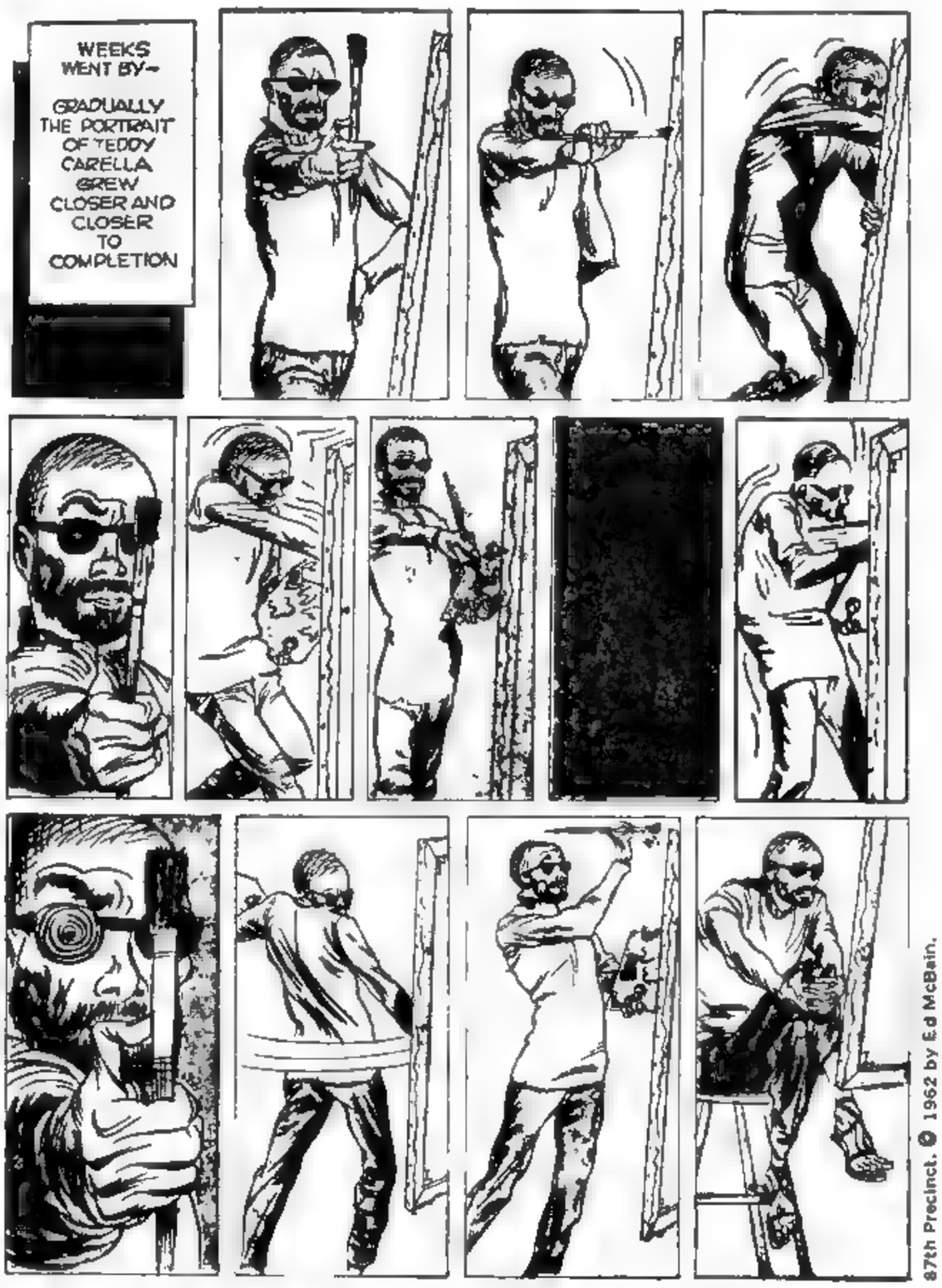
STEWART: *You obviously worked very fast on this.*

KRIGSTEIN: Oh yes, yes.

STEWART: *Did you break down some of his panels?*

KRIGSTEIN: Yes, I did. This page was entirely my own;


THE GUY ..IF IT'S A GUY...WHO DID THESE MURDERS IS A PSYCHO.. I KNOW IT., I FEEL IT...
IT'S THE K ND OF TH NG HARDEST TO DEAL WITH .IT'S LIKE AIR. SEEMS TO HAVE NO LOGICAL BEGINNING OR END.
WELL ... IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN A HUNCH TO GET THIS ONE. I WANT TO LOOK INTO MEYER'S REPORT ON THE MURDER WEAPON AGAIN.
87th Precinct. © 1962 by Ed McBain.


WEEKS WENT BY—
GRADUALLY THE PORTRAIT OF TEDDY CARELLA GREW CLOSER AND CLOSER TO COMPLETION
87th Precinct. © 1962 by Ed McBain.

what the writer called for was something quite different.

STEWART: *I think this is great; building up this whole thing with tones.*

KRIGSTEIN: I was playing around with layers of tone sheets there. I think these mechanical devices are a legitimate artistic means, and they're too easily and too quickly passed over on the grounds that they're mechanical, which is a philistine rationalization of untalented people. I explored the possibilities of those sheets in comics and I continued to use them in other markets. They can be used to evoke a tonal quality reminiscent of the great engravers of the 19th century. I sort of insinuated them into many important illustration jobs, partly to make that statement that the use of them is legitimate—that there is a relationship between the finest sort of expression and comic book expression.

STEWART: *In this story, were you trying, by squaring off everything at right angles, to build up the complete idea of the title, "Monotony"?*

MONOTONY
EXACTLY AS HE HAD DONE EVERY MORNING FOR THE PAST FOURTEEN YEARS, MILTON GANS SIGHED, PUSHED OPEN THE DOOR TO THE BANK EMPLOYEES ENTRANCE, NOTED THAT, AS ALWAYS, IT WAS PRECISELY TWO MINUTES TO NINE ON THE COLD-FACE WALL-CLOCK...
...STRODE TO HIS LITTLE CUBICLE BEHIND THE RAILING, HUNG UP HIS HAT, COAT, AND UMBRELLA ON THE RACK BESIDE HIS DESK...
TORE OFF THE PREVIOUS DAY'S PAGE FROM HIS DESK CALENDAR...
...DUSTED OFF THE WELL-WORN SWIVEL CHAIR WITH HIS IMMACULATE HANDKERCHIEF
SHARPENED HIS TRAY FULL OF PENCILS TO NEEDLE POINTS
AND SAT DOWN...
© 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines.

KRIGSTEIN: Oh, very definitely. It was an attempt to break down, to satirize that particular type of character. Now that you mention it, in your article you took exception to the fact that the books are in disarray, which is inconsistent with the general precision of the layout. How do you feel about that now?

STEWART: *Now I realize that you were trying to break up a static composition.*

KRIGSTEIN: Right.

STEWART: *When you signed "You, Murderer" "Dr. Caligari Krigstein," were you in any way emulating the film* Caligari?

KRIGSTEIN: No, it was just that I felt that there is a similarity of genre, that's all. Both very weird, and rather expressionistic.

BENSON: *Did you have any qualms about doing the horror stories?*

KRIGSTEIN: No, I didn't. I guess there's a dark side of me that accepted them. I recall that Harvey thought they were terrible and we had some discussions where he would suggest that I refuse to do the horror stories. There was one scene that I did regret doing afterward; I think it was in "The Purge."

But the bulk of my work for EC was not horror stories. I did as much science fiction for Gaines as horror. And the kind

MARBLES
IT WAS A SOLEMN MOMENT FOR THE CAREFULLY PICKED AND EXTENSIVELY TRAINED CREW OF THE X-17. AFTER LONG MONTHS, THEY NOW STOOD UPON THE THRESHOLD OF FAME AND FORTUNE. A GLORIOUS ADVENTURE FOR THEM TWINKLED BECKONINGLY FROM THE VAST BLACK VOID OVERHEAD. THE X-17 WAS TO BE THE FIRST MAN-CARRYING ROCKET TO BE LAUNCHED FROM EARTH. THEY WOULD BE THE FIRST EARTHMEN TO REACH ANOTHER PLANET. THE FOUR MEN STARED UP AT THE STAR-STUDDED HEAVENS IN AWE AND FASCINATION
LOOK AT 'EM UP THERE... WAITING FOR US! STARS PLANETS... THE WHOLE UNIVERSE WAITING!
FUNNY! FOR ALL WE KNOW, THOSE BRIGHT LITTLE PIN-POINTS WE SEE UP THERE MIGHT BE NOTHING BUT MARBLES! SHINY LITTLE MARBLES!
DON'T WORRY, HOLLIS! THOSE STARS UP THERE ARE A LOT BIGGER THAN MARBLES! AND THEY CAN'T BE PLAYED WITH, EITHER...NOT WITHOUT GETTING YOUR FINGERS BURNED SOME OF THOSE FIRE BALLS UP THERE HAVE WE DON'T KNOW HOW MANY MILLIONS OF DEGREES HEAT BURNING THEM UP!
NOT THE ONE WE'RE GOING TO LAND ON, I HOPE!
NO, K? NOT THE ONE WE'RE GOING TO LAND ON! MARS DOESN'T BURN LIKE A STAR! MARS IS A PLANET
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! THIS IS A MOMENTOUS HOUR IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND
B. Krigstein
© 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines.

of horror stories that I was given really were not on the blood and gore side. It wasn't that I said anything. I think that Gaines and Feldstein were psychologically perceptive enough to know which people would like what kind of stories. It was part of their job to channel suitable material to the artists.

STEWART: *This is a rare opportunity for me to see this 3-D story in single image, because I can't see 3-D so I was never able to read it in the comics.*

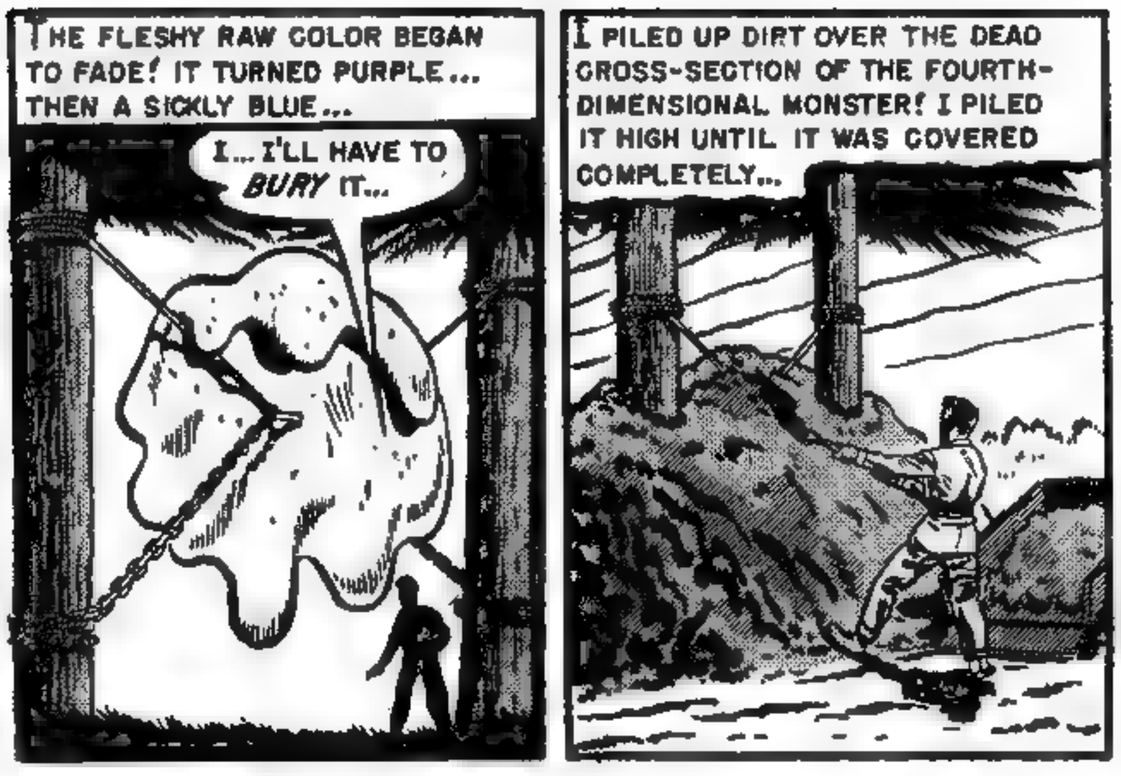
KRIGSTEIN: Well, that's the smallest part of it.

BENSON: *When you did the 3-D, did you start with the sheet that had the most on it, or did you start at the top?*

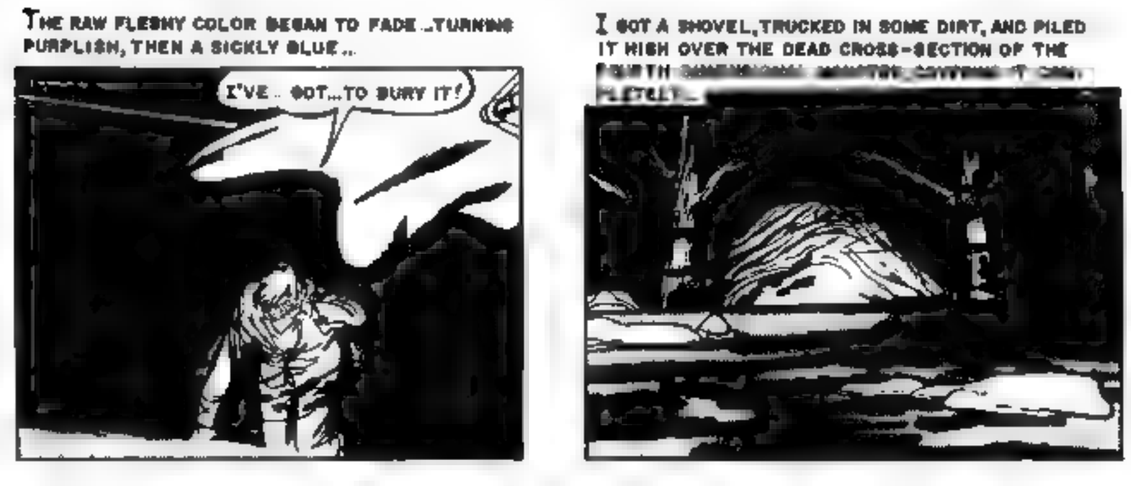
KRIGSTEIN: My general system—I don't know about the 3-D things—is to work from the bottom up.

BENSON: *I mean sheetwise; which layer did you start with?*

KRIGSTEIN: Oh, I don't recall now how I did that. I forget the technicalities involved there. It was really fun to do, because you were forced to analyze space relationships, and it was a marvelous test of composition. If you were a phony composer, your 3-D would look ridiculous. You were forced to use very honest perspective. But personally, I don't see any time for 3-D stuff, despite the fact that some good things may


THE FLESHY RAW COLOR BEGAN TO FADE! IT TURNED PURPLE... THEN A SICKLY BLUE...
I... I'LL HAVE TO BURY IT...
I PILED UP DIRT OVER THE DEAD CROSS-SECTION OF THE FOURTH-DIMENSIONAL MONSTER! I PILED IT HIGH UNTIL IT WAS COVERED COMPLETELY...
© 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines.

Below is a scene from one of Krigstein's two 3-D stories, "The Monster from the Fourth Dimension." Above is Al Feldstein's earlier rendering of the same two panels.


THE RAW FLESHY COLOR BEGAN TO FADE ..TURNING PURPLISH, THEN A SICKLY BLUE ..
I'VE .. GOT...TO BURY IT!
I GOT A SHOVEL, TRUCKED IN SOME DIRT, AND PILED IT HIGH OVER THE DEAD CROSS-SECTION OF THE
© 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines.

be done. It's just a trick, and has nothing to do with the emotional force or the breakdown of the story.

STEWART: *You have a knack, it seems to me, for capturing certain human poses that other artists and illustrators always seem to miss. And I can think of specific examples, like in "The Bath," this guy with his shoulders hunched up while he's getting in the bath.*

KRIGSTEIN: I'm glad you noticed that particular thing. When I drew it, I was very conscious that I was representing a very human action.

STEWART: *Another thing related to that is that you sometimes draw faces from unusual angles, for example, from a three-quarter low view.*

BUT ALWAYS AFTER THESE DISGUSTING EXPERIENCES ...THESE CONTACTS WITH THE NATIVES ... MY MASTER WOULD TAKE HIS BATH, FOR THAT SEEMED TO BE THE ONLY THING THAT WOULD CALM HIM AND PUT HIM INTO A GOOD HUMOR AGAIN...
IF I CATCH ANYTHING FROM THAT MISERABLE TOAD, I'LL HAVE HIM HACKED TO DEATH!
THE WATER IS HOT, MASTER!
THE WATER WOULD LAVE HIM GENTLY .SMELLING OF SOAP AND GERMICIDES AND BATH SALTS...
AH! GOOD! THE HOTTER, THE BETTER! I MUST CLEAN THEIR SLIME FROM ME, RAOUL! I MUST REMOVE THEIR POLLUTION!
© 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines.

KRIGSTEIN: Maybe it's because I have such a strong hostility to common mores in illustration. The ideals that are employed and accepted by most illustrators are very foreign to me. The ideals of movement, the ideals of human beings that they use as prototypes are extremely foreign to me and unreal. I think they're unreal to everyone, and I think that it's a phony kind of glamor that most illustrators are loyal to. I have an extreme hostility to it, and probably it is because of that hostility that I almost perversely steer clear of these stereotypes, and I deliberately use almost, one might say, ugly, or revealing human things, because I think that they are beautiful. I think that these ugly things that people do are really beautiful; they are real. And I just despise this so called beautiful packaging that illustrators do. I can't stand it, and I'll do my damnedest to destroy it; by my work, that is. And if I can get people to see things my way, so much the better.

STEWART [facetiously]: *You probably never worked for* The Saturday Evening Post.

KRIGSTEIN: No, and I never made the effort to. But I wouldn't make any blanket condemnation, or approval, of any publication or organization. [*Krigstein did eventually contribute to* The Saturday Evening Post.]

STEWART: *Who are your favorite illustrators, in magazines?*

KRIGSTEIN: You know, I don't have any. I seek my inspiration elsewhere. If anything, they are the old time illustrators, like Howard Pyle, or the old American painters. Winslow Homer is to me one of the greatest artist-illustrators that we ever had.

STEWART: *Most people don't know of his pictures where he did try to capture human characteristics, all his people on beaches and things. People only know his seascapes.*

KRIGSTEIN: That's unfortunate, because I think his greatest work is the painting and drawing of people; and his Civil War things, his illustrations for *Harpers* of the Civil War are his greatest. These are the guys that inspire me . . . Bierstadt, and a couple of other early Americans; Remington, of course, is great. But the really greatest of them all is Winslow Homer. These are the artists that inspire me very much.

STEWART: *This is the best way that an illustrator should work, because most current illustrators are imitating other current illustrators. Like Bob Peake has all his little Bob Peakes, and it never occurs to them that they could derive their inspiration from a more classical source.*

BENSON: *Were these two strips here published?*

KRIGSTEIN: Yes. These are two Sunday strips I penciled for Burne Hogarth. He first had somebody else on them and he wasn't happy with them and he asked me to do it. I thought it was awful. I tried to do something with it, keeping it light and airy, you know. And then he used this very heavy handed inking style over it; and he made a few changes. I don't remember how much of this inked page actually reflects my work. I think I saw it and made sure to photostat the pencils for the second one. I found it very heavy handed and repulsive.

BENSON: *What do you think of Harvey Kurtzman's art?*

KRIGSTEIN: I think it's wonderful! He has developed a form of artistic abstraction that only a comic artist has. I'm just nuts about Harvey's style. He has the ability to simplify and stylize . . . I felt it was a misfortune that his own personal art was not published as he did it, full of verve and originality, instead of being redrawn by another artist.

BENSON: *Did you like his dramatic comics?*

KRIGSTEIN: I always liked the books Harvey did. I always regretted that we could never get together. I'd very much wanted to, and I did do one or two things, but somehow it never really worked out. We didn't work very smoothly together, and nothing ever really materialized.

MIRACLE JONES

by HOGARTH

RING-RING-G-G-G

MM-M--AH, SWEET MUSIC! A NEW DAY IS BORN!

COCK-A-DOODLE-DOOO

PING!

THAT'S KING BARNYARD JONES—ISN'T HE THE HANDSOMEST ROOSTER?

MY DEAR, I'M ALL SWOONY INSIDE!

MOVE BACK, CHICKENS--- STEP ASIDE, NOW! SUN'S COMIN' UP AND I'VE GOT SOME IMPORTANT BUSINESS TO ANNOUNCE! MAKE ROOM, SISTERS!

COCK-A-DOODLE-DOOOOOO

COCK-A-DOODLE DOOOOO

HEY, YOU! SHUT UP AND GET BACK INSIDE OR I'LL RUN YOU IN FOR DISTURBING THE PEACE!

ULP!

I'M KING NOW, — SEE?---- CHICKEN!

YESSIR!

AL WILLIAMSON

*Krigstein's first assignment at EC was to ink the story "A New Beginning" (*Weird Science *#22), which had been penciled by Al Williamson. When he brought in the inked story, Williamson was unhappy with the result and hurriedly reinked it, calling in Frank Frazetta to help him meet the deadline. Some of the Krigstein inked panels remain in the finished story on pages 6 and 7. Here is page 1 of "A New Beginning," printed for the first time as Krigstein inked it. Why portions of the page were left uninked is unknown. The splash panel is on the opposite page; the other two panels are printed below in a slightly smaller scale.*

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STEWART: *Tell us about the one story you did for* Mad.

KRIGSTEIN: Well, Harvey and I were always 'coquetting' with each other for a long period of time, and he suggested that one day he was going to use me, and I suggested that I was very receptive to the idea and quite interested in doing it. This lasted for a certain length of time and finally it came about that he had this story for me to do, which I was very happy to do.

I worked on the story, and he exhibited a very artistically liberal idea; he was never interested in seeing the pencils, I could bring him the finishes. Which was slightly unorthodox, you see, because the usual manner . . . I had been working with Feldstein and although it was really purely a formal thing, I would bring the pencils in, and we would discuss it, and it would be extremely rare that Al would have any editorial comments to make. As I say, it was a pure formality; well, Harvey dispensed with the formality. I brought in the finishes, and it happened that he wasn't there when I delivered them, and I left them there, and the next day I received a call from Harvey. It seems that he liked it very much, "but . . ." And then he proceeded to ask me would I be adverse to the idea of doing the story over again, and he would be willing to pay me a certain amount of money in addition if I would, because it was not at all what he had in mind. And I was quite shocked by his proposal, and I told him that I wouldn't be able to do it again. What did you think of it?

STEWART: *You had a much stronger sense of real caricature, delineating it, you know, than the other EC artists. Though I still love what they did at EC, this kind of shaded caricature.*

KRIGSTEIN: Well, I loved what the other people did there; I thought it was just great. But I also liked what *I* did. And I also resented very much the fact that Harvey had any preconceived notions of how I should execute a job. It seemed to me that that was entirely the province of the artist, and therefore I refused to do it over. I don't know if that was the last thing I did for Harvey . . .

BENSON: *There was "Bringing Back Father," "Crash McCool," and the Hemingway illustration.*

KRIGSTEIN: Right. There again . . . You see, each time I'd get an assignment from him, it was quite foreign to me to do exactly what he had in mind. Harvey loved to do the breakdowns and prescribe what the artist would do, and I always felt that . . . I'm always glad to hear or see what an editor or an art director has to say. That's fine for a sort of document. I'll make a note of that and put it in my files. But I always have my own ideas about how to go about these things, and I always felt free to do so, and I didn't feel that Harvey was an exception in this regard. The same thing happened with the Hemingway thing; I brought back something which was quite different from what he had in mind. Each time we would get together it would result in this kind of crisis. And I regretted it very much, because I feel that Harvey is a truly talented person, a rare talent. I have always felt this and I always wanted to work in his things. He was always doing something exciting and interesting. It was just regrettable that there should be this kind of . . .

BENSON: *If you had worked in his serious comics, do you think this conflict would have lessened?*

KRIGSTEIN: No, I don't. I think that there was an overlapping of functions which would always have meant a conflict. Harvey was deeply interested not only in the story but the breakdown, and breakdown to me is everything. Since we both overlapped on this function, there's always bound to be a conflict. And I certainly could not accept Harvey's breakdown ideas carte blanche, and so the situation was never resolved.

Harvey, I must say, always admired my inking; he always said that I was a marvelous inker.

STEWART: *This leads us to the story about your collaboration with Al Williamson, because I think that Williamson was not happy with your inking.*

KRIGSTEIN: Well, I wasn't happy with Williamson. I thought that it was silly of Bill Gaines to give me as a first assignment the job of working with Williamson. He and I didn't get along very well. He was a little too 'artistic' for me—the artistic type.

STEWART: *What did you think of Williamson as an artist?*

KRIGSTEIN: I loved many of the stories that he handed in. I've heard it said, perhaps mistakenly, that he always worked with collaborators. One's never certain because their names often didn't appear on the credits. But I think that his stories had a very marvelous mood about them that nobody else captured. Although when I would go into it, there'd be a very peculiar reaction that I'd have that it was kind of put together from many sources, as if he'd done a kind of very clever marvelous paste-up job. I don't know why I had this reaction; there was a certain lack of unity. But he did some remarkable things.

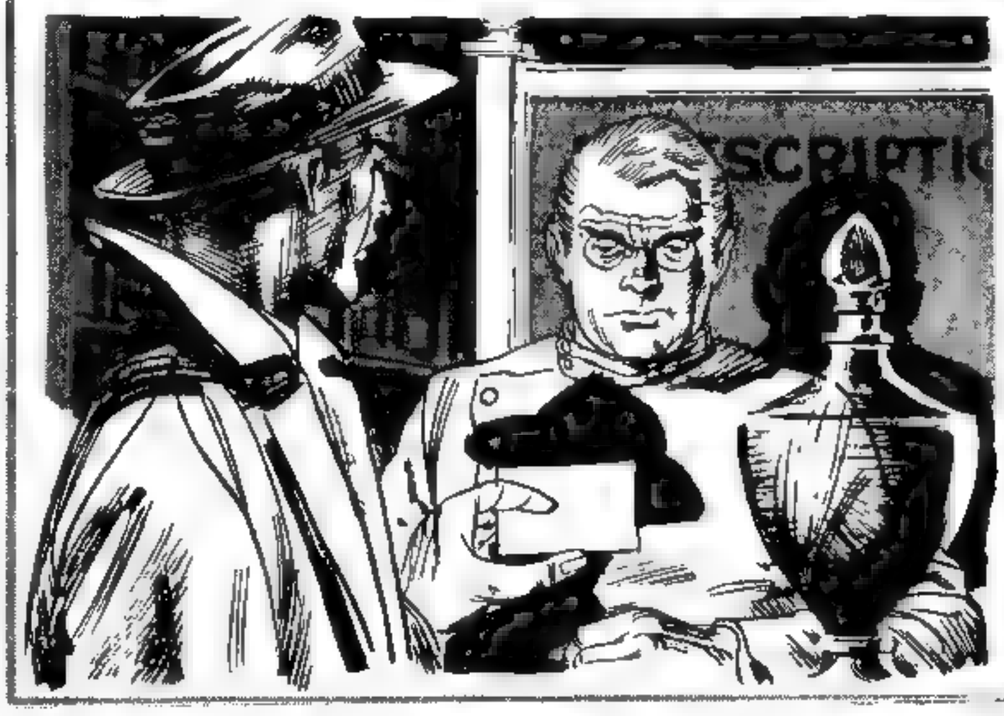
BENSON: *What about your collaboration with Reed Crandall for PictoFiction?*

KRIGSTEIN: You mean where Reed finished the story I had started? I'm surprised that you recognized that it was a collaboration.

BENSON: *It almost seemed to me at the time that you had done some of the inking and he had done some of the pencilling.*

My last stop was a drug store. I cornered the pharmacist and flashed him my P.I. card.

"Tell me what you can about Harry Wilson," I tried a different tack. "Has he purchased any poison lately . . . any lethal drugs?"



"Fall Guy for Murder" © 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines.

KRIGSTEIN: Well, Reed is a very wonderful artist, and maybe he deliberately created that effect. That was the story that caused the break between Gaines and myself. He started a new book, and, in a word, the ideological foundation of that book was that crime pays. And I received this story and was very shocked upon reading it, but I felt that as the artist I would simply employ my prerogative, which I had always employed; making certain changes that suited me. And in the last panel I did something that indicated that there was a moral reckoning insofar as the criminal was concerned. I don't mind cynicism, or realism, extreme realism, but I do mind, very deeply, propagating the notion that immorality or crime is moral, or good. If you want to point out the existence of immorality, this has been the privilege of the greatest artists in the world, and some of them have been at greater or lesser pains to point out that this is wrong. They may have been very realistic and brutal, but they never condoned it, and I certainly didn't propose to use whatever talents I had in support of this notion.

So I changed the panel and brought it in, and Feldstein read it very happily until he came to the last panel; "What's this, Bernie?" I said, "Well, I changed the story; I don't like the way you ended the story." And he said, "Well, we can't do that." And I said, "Well, neither can I; I can't do it this way." He said, "Well, if you don't do it, this is it. You've got to do it this way; this is the new book." I said, "I can't do it and I won't do it, and I'm afraid this *is* it." And he called Bill Gaines and he told him, "Bernie doesn't want to do this," and I could hear Bill's excited voice over the phone, and Al said, "Well, Bill says you gotta do it," and I said, "Well, no." And that was it. So I let them know that I didn't want to be credited for it, and he had Crandall do the story and I never went back there, and that was the end between me and EC.

STEWART: *That was about the time of the end of EC anyway.*

KRIGSTEIN: I think they made a horrible, horrible mistake in doing that; just poor judgment, relying on the lowest common denominator for sales. My view has always been that good stuff is what sells, not bad stuff, and good stuff will last, and bad stuff won't. But they were very panicky at the time, and they just went to the lowest thing they could do.

STEWART: *In other words, they thought they were certain to fold.*

KRIGSTEIN: That was my impression. They were losing money and they wanted to do something very desperate, and they knew that all this shit, really, had been selling all this time, and they figured that they'd go back to it, and that the more vile the stuff is, the more money one makes.

STEWART: *But they missed one important point, and that was that kids won't pay 25¢ for a magazine, and adults aren't that interested in paying money for something that's not up to the quality of other stuff they can find in a magazine. So they had no audience for these things.*

KRIGSTEIN: Well, I never figured it out just that way. I really had always been uninterested in the business aspect; figuring out these deals, smooth paper—25¢, and newsprint—15¢, you know. I really just wanted good stories. I felt that people would pay money for good stories. If you give them something fresh, something interesting, they'll go to great lengths to get these stories. Kids may not spend a quarter for a comic book, but they'll spend 75¢ for a movie.

STEWART: *The first thing that became apparent in PictoFiction was that these were printed stories and they were not good stories.*

KRIGSTEIN: Oh yes; I remember that aspect of it too. That was another stupid thing; it went very heavy on text and very small on pictures. In other words, their panic expressed itself in a foolish way. They again (I think Feldstein was the influence here) decided that what people wanted was more story and less pictures, which was the exact opposite of the truth. People wanted a good visualization, and they still do and always will want an imaginative powerful pictorializing of ideas and stories. There's a hunger for it, and people go to the movies for it, and books are being widely illustrated because there's a deep hunger for it. And he did the exact opposite of what people are hungering for.

I think that reflects a very deep distrust of artists, really. And it's a very important sickness that the field will have to overcome; this profound distrust of the very person that is the reason for the existence of the field. The businessman distrusts the artist, but it's only the artist who creates the business for him. It's a very frightening thing and one of the important problems that an artist has to deal with. And it's this terrible

distrust that destroyed them.

STEWART: *Do you think that PictoFiction, if it were done right, could be a creative medium?*

KRIGSTEIN: Not only could be, but has been. I don't mean just in the past fifteen or thirty years, I mean for hundreds of years. There's nothing really new about it. The Chinese have done it. Rowlandson is a marvelous example of it. Another fine example is Gustave Doré's book about Russia, which was just issued in this country about five years ago. It really is nothing more than a comic book, because there are pictures and captions; and it's very witty, very satirical, but nonetheless, it's the same form as the comic book form. There have been very great artists and cartoonists who have worked in this medium. And medieval artists worked in continuous picture stories. The only thing challenging about it, and the only thing marvelous about it, is that it's a popular form. And it's a very contradictory notion, but that's where the whole problem lies—it's so popular. It's so popular it doesn't have artistic respect.

The odd thing about it is that people think that a visual medium, a visual art, is inferior to a literary art. I find that very odd—that a complex art such as a visual art, a picture, which is a very complex, a very complicated medium of expression and communication, should be regarded as being lesser or on a lower scale than a literary art. And there's a terrible contradiction here, because you read the loftiest art criticism, which will go to very great lengths to explain how complex this form of communication is, and then if you speak to a literate person, he will tell you what a bastard form it is because it *is* visual—"Comics is a bastard form—it's *visual*. How can it be good?"

STEWART: *There are a lot of people in charge of the visual arts that don't really think . . .*

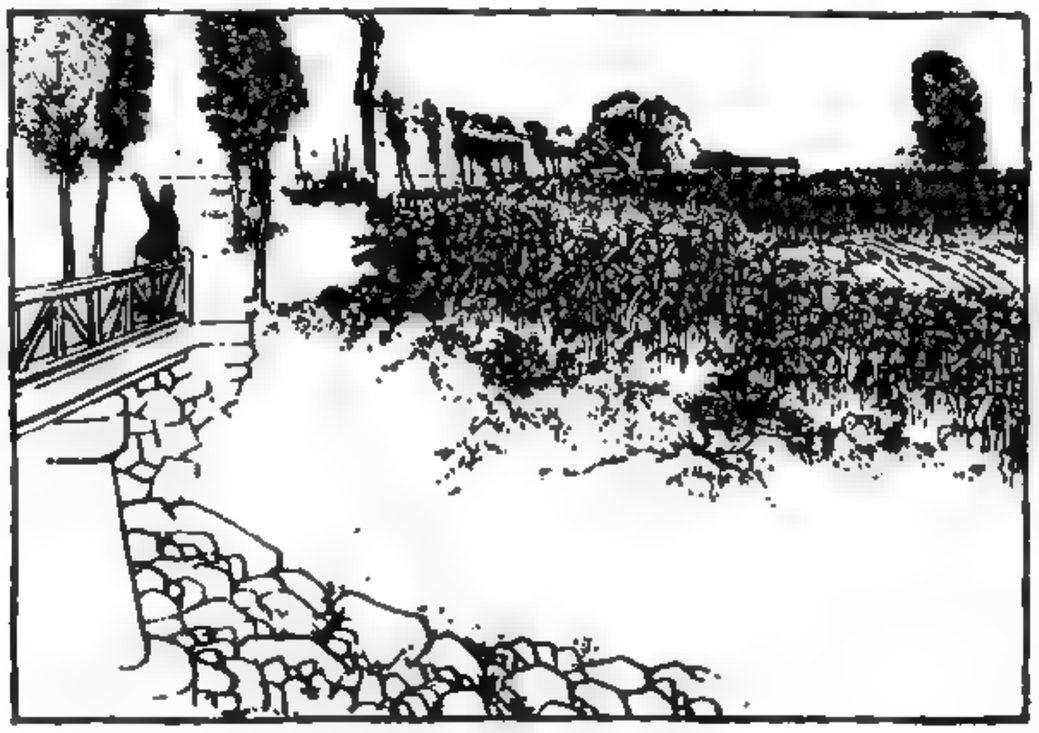
KRIGSTEIN: In other words, a lot of people have power in the arts, have power to distribute art, or see what gets produced, who shouldn't have power.

BENSON: *I'd like to ask how you got started in comics, and how you became interested in them as an art form.*

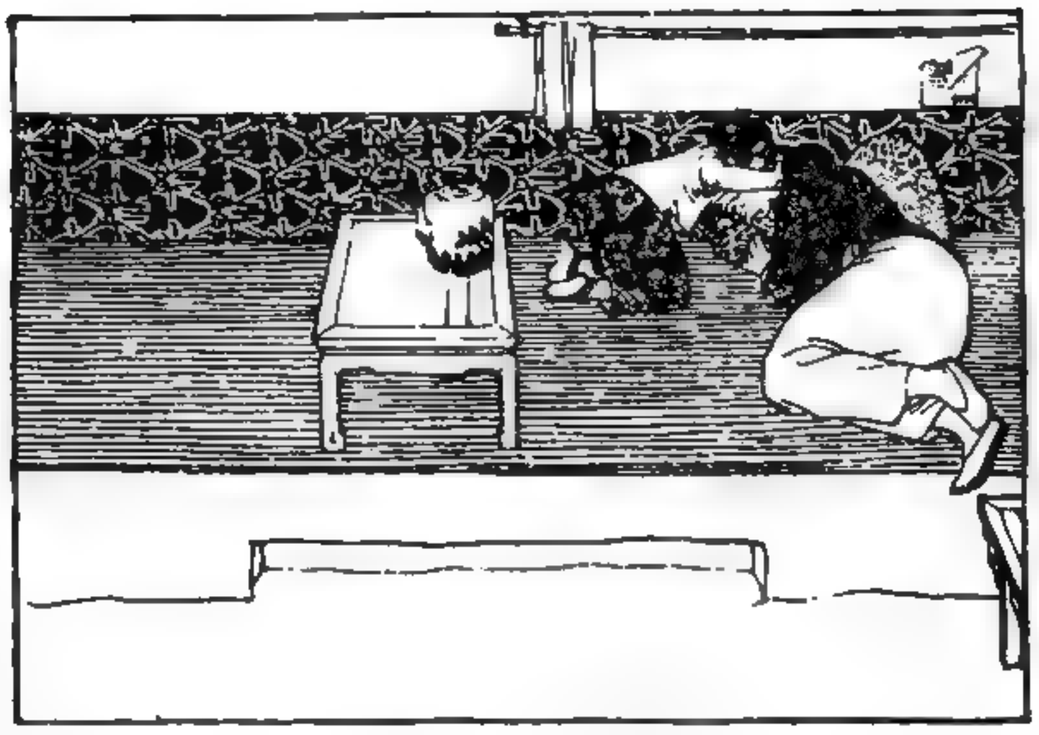
KRIGSTEIN: Well, I had always looked at comics with contempt, but a friend of mine, who worked in the field, had repeatedly asked me to try drawing for it. Finally it did come about that I needed the money and I took a job, and then I was forced to examine closely the medium of comics. And in looking, I found that here were spectacular masters of drawing—Simon and Kirby . . . I found that comics was drawing, and it became the only serious field for me at that time. Then I went into the Army, and when I got out, I went back into comics the same day. And as far as the germinating of ideas and style and so forth goes, my time in comics was the most artistically productive, because of the drawing and composition. And by being in comics, I became no longer embarrassed about the so called limitations, of working in black and white and so forth, and I shed all the criticisms of the form as I worked in it.

STEWART: *A question related to John's is; where did you study, and what did you do before you did comic books?*

KRIGSTEIN: Well, that's the least interesting part of my artistic career. Where I studied is really very unimportant. The only time I was able to learn anything was when I actually worked at it. Which includes comics. Comics was one of my



115. She went to the edge of the village and saw the cart disappearing rapidly in the distance. She stared ahead of her, overwhelmed with grief.



116. It was dusk and the bell marking the end of the day's work was ringing. Shuangshuang went home and threw herself on the **kang**.

I've recently seen a book called *The People's Comic Book*, published by Doubleday Anchor, and there I could again see the possibilities of comics as a real art form. The breakdown is very straight, but the psychological perception is quite deep. They're using their own tremendous classic style, and they're absolutely uncompromising in the artistic quality. Of course, from a political point of view, the story content is quite silly in some of them. But some are very moving, and I don't put them down one bit.

The artists in that book used natural and spacious compositions, not tricked up with faked perspectives but expressively organized and designed. The pictures have a compositional subtlety which allows for a stronger effect on the reader. Their breakdown *looks* conventional and straight, but it's the psychological depth that counts.

Of course, the Chinese comic book artist suffers an obvious limitation of another kind. There's also a tradition of satire and farce in Chinese painting, and I doubt if an artist drawing on this tradition would get very far with the Chinese publishers.

most important schools.

STEWART: *That's interesting, because every time I talk to an artist about his schooling, he says, "Oh well, I'm self taught."*

KRIGSTEIN: I think an important part of that, too, is that schools teach what's most accepted, and an artist is very rarely interested in what's accepted as good at the moment, because, first of all, it's usually a fraud; what happens to be accepted at the moment is nine times out of ten pure fraud and tripe. And it's what's not accepted, or what's unknown, or even what's *despised* that might be the precise answer for an individual artist. And one would very often have to do the very thing that brings ridicule and disrepute upon him in order to get what he wants; so that a real artist, I think, can only go one place to learn, and that's himself . . . and work, that's all.

STEWART: *In my article I think I talked about how your line quality would change to fit the type of story you were doing, as opposed to most other artists who always had the exact same stylistic surface no matter what context they were working in. For example, "The Flying Machine" was stylized, formal, "Pipe Dream" had a loose sketchy style, and so forth, whereas other artists took their style as a given.*

KRIGSTEIN: That's one of the extreme limitations of most comic book artists. In fact the demands of comic books and comic strips are very limiting for that, because they *define a style.* I always thought that there was no such thing as "a style"; that the idea of drawing was simply too big to be confined to a style. So naturally it always grated me to think in terms of style, and I felt that all of art was open.

BENSON: *On the other hand, there's no mistaking a Krigstein story when you're going through the EC's.*

KRIGSTEIN: I was surprised to hear that, by the way. In fact, people used to call me a stylist, which I thought was a kind of idiotic connotation—"Oh, he's a *stylist.*" But I never thought of style. I just thought of expressing that thought and feeling in the best way. But because I never felt that I had a style, I was surprised to hear from people that my work was very recognizable. But now, of course, I am aware that it is unified in a certain way.

BENSON: *I liked the style you used for the Hillman comics very much.*

KRIGSTEIN: Some of the stuff there was butchered in the

I don't remember just when I decided to do something to help establish an organization in the comic field for the purpose of setting minimum standards of pay rates. It was sometime between the time I worked for Ziff-Davis (in good times), did some work for Timely and DC (the slide into bad times), and the time that Bill Gaines took me onto the staff of EC. I remember that the Society of Comic Book Illustrators (SOCBI) was functioning while I did some free-lance work for Stan Lee, because I used to deliver jobs to the Timely factory carrying a sign advertising the meetings.

I spent days telephoning scores of artists, discussing the need for some sort of organization. I talked to as many as I could, from the top names in the field to the average journeyman workers who did the major proportion of the work.

The early meetings were fairly well attended and lively. I was elected president. There were many others who did yeoman work for SOCBI, but perhaps I shouldn't mention the names of people still working in comics. Harry Harrison, then an artist and writer in the field and now a well known science fiction writer, was very active.

The first crisis was over the choice of a name. I took the position that comics was a great art, that we were in fact fine artists and fine illustrators. I felt that it was vital that we should understand our own unique talents, that we should value our work. "Comic book artist" was the common descriptive term for our work—and curiously this meant that we were *not* artists. An illustrator was thought to be someone functioning in a superior sphere, above the comic book "artist." I wished to challenge the accepted image and therefore I argued for the name Society of Comic Book *Illustrators.* Paradoxically, by using the term *illustrators* it designated us as *artists.* My view was accepted after much argument.

The next crisis was the debate over the question of what kind of organization we should be; a society like the Society of Illustrators—more or less a restricted group with an aura of exclusiveness and seeking cooperative and fraternal relations with the publishers—or a union capable of enforcing minimum rates of pay, through strike action if necessary. My position was that only by maintaining a decent minimum page rate could we resist the destructive competition between artists, which drove down rates, and the cynical use of inferior artists, which also lowered rates and at the same time demonstrated that from a commercial point of view *superior art is unnecessary*!

I was opposed to an exclusive "guild" which would have a closed membership. Instead, I felt that publishers should be free to hire whomever they wished, provided they adhered to an established minimum rate. I thought such a minimum would remove the incentive for a publisher to use inferior work, since, if he had to pay well anyhow, he would naturally prefer good work.

The sentiment among the less established artists seemed to be in favor of a union. The better known people were generally opposed to the idea. It was also the leading artists who most ridiculed the notion of us as illustrators.

Our meetings grew larger and more emotional. Some of the more important artists came to the meetings; people from DC, EC and Timely. We gathered sufficient impetus for the publishers to begin taking serious notice of us. Because of pressure from some people who didn't want to antagonize their publishers, editors were invited to speak at the meetings. At one memorable meeting, Bob Kanigher addressed our large group and delivered a diatribe on our ignorance and arrogance in assuming the title of illustrator. In a verbal assault he attacked the idea that we might be anything more than commercial craftsmen producing a product on demand. Interestingly, a member of the Executive Committee of SOCBI became acquainted with Kanigher at that time, lost interest in the organization, and thereafter began doing free-lance work for DC.

Our meetings remained torn by the conflict; union or professional society? The Executive Committee generally was not inspired to move in the direction of a mere professional society. The "established" artists in the field were unsympathetic to a union. So our organization eventually collapsed.

Although I had done work for DC, I no longer received work from them. But even while I was president of SOCBI, and my views were known, Bill Gaines took me on his staff at his usual rates, which were, at that time, generally among the highest in the field.

inking until I got to ink it myself. There was a story called "The Fly," which was a beautiful story for me at that time, as I recall it, and the inker absolutely destroyed it. When that happened I began battling Ed Cronin, the editor, to let me ink my own stuff. And then I began maturing further, because his stories were good, and I was able to complete them in a style that I liked.

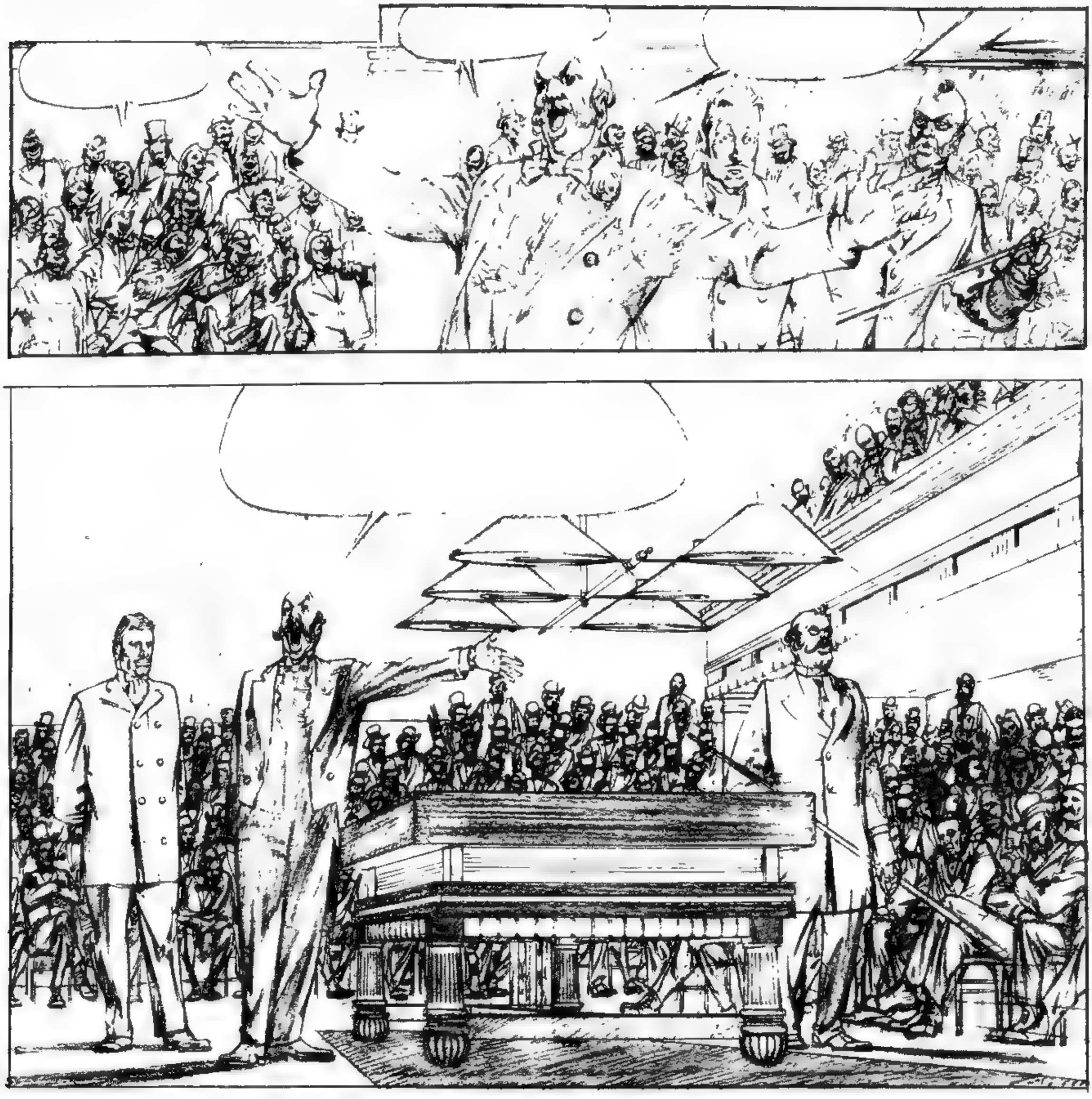
You see, that's another aspect of the limitation of the field. That little struggle is another reflection of the dreadful limitations of the field, which exist not only in this field, but in many commercial fields. It was assumed that a penciller could give his work to an inker, and violence would not be done to the story, because inkers were professionally good and pencillers were professionally good. The concept of artistic unity did not exist in his head. So I really had to battle the guy. Because of his economic set up in his office, it was more convenient for him to have an inker take my work, and I had to break down a convention there. And I assume that these kinds of limitations and straight jackets still exist in the field.

But all things considered, I liked what I did at Hillman. And Cronin was a very interesting editor, extremely interesting.

BENSON: *What did you do before Hillman?*

KRIGSTEIN: After the war I worked for a man named Bernie Baily, who was an agent. He had a group of offices, I think on West 44th Street, and I had a desk there. There was another man who had a desk there named Charlie Voight, an old, great, marvelous cartoonist. He was a master, far ahead of his time.

This story here, "The Treasure Keeper," was done in that shop; the first story I did when I got out of the army. And to



"The Phantom of the Farm" © 1957 by Chipden Publishing Corp.

WE'RE..WE'RE..
..WE'RE BEING FOLLOWED!
SHUT UP!
I'LL INVESTIGATE!
THERE'S NOTHIN' HERE!
YOU'RE GETTIN' JITTERY OVER NOTHIN'!
UH-HUH! SOME ANIMAL MUST HAVE KNOCKED OVER A CAN OR A CRATE!
M-MADIGAN!
L-LOOK!
I-I SEE IT!
LET'S GET HIM!
THERE'S NO ONE HERE!
MADIGAN, I'M SCARED! WHAT IS IT?
S-I DON'T KNOW! I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT MYSELF!
IT'S THERE NEAR THE CORRAL!
H-HE'S GONE AGAIN! MADIGAN, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE! SOMETHIN' CRAZY IS GOIN ON!
THERE'S NOTHIN' WRONG!
WE'RE GOIN' INTO THAT FARMHOUSE AN' GRAB THAT DOUGH!

"The House that Lived" © 1955 by 20th Century Comic Corp.

SEVERAL WEEKS LATER, JONATHAN GIBBONS COMPLETED THE SALE OF HIS HOUSE

I'M BEING GENEROUS..
MORE THAN GENEROUS.
FIVE THOUSAND FOR THIS OLD PLACE IS A LOT OF MONEY!
PLEASE DON'T TALK THAT WAY, MR WILCOX!
WE LOVE THIS HOUSE
IT..IT'S ALMOST A LIVING PART OF US. OUR CHILDREN GREW UP HERE
WELL ER-HEM.. YOU CAN'T SELL SENTIMENTAL VALUE, MRS GIBBONS! HEM HEM!
HOWEVER, IT'S A GOOD LOCATION FOR A BUSINESS THAT I HAVE IN MIND!
OTHERWISE I WOULDN'T GIVE YOU FIVE HUNDRED FOR IT!
WELL.. GOOD-BYE AND GOOD LUCK
IT RAINED HARD THE DAY THE ELDERLY COUPLE LEFT THE OLD HOUSE FOR THE LAST TIME..
IT'S NOT OUR HOUSE ANY MORE ELVIRA!
REMEMBER THE WAY IT WAS... WHEN THE BOYS AND WE WERE YOUNG?
WHEN THE HOUSE USED TO ECHO TO THE SOUNDS OF CHILDREN'S GAMES?
THE HOUSE STOOD THERE, A SILENT SENTINEL..
THE WIND, WHISPERING THROUGH IT'S BOARDS SOUNDED LIKE A SIGH..
ONE WEEK LATER, RUFUS WILCOX CAME TO LOOK OVER HIS PROPERTY..
LET'S SEE NOW..
FIX IT HERE..
REPAIR IT THERE..
SOON I'LL HAVE A FIRST-CLASS MOTEL..
AND NEXT TO IT A FILLING STATION..
DEFINITELY A MONEY-MAKING PROPOSITION!

"The Hypnotist" © 1955 by 20th Century Comic Corp.

THE MAIN EVENT WAS FORGOTTEN AS THE SPORTS WRITERS SOON CROWDED INTO THE DRESSING ROOM...
DAVIS HAD HIS EYE ON THE TITLE HE'D NEVER BEEN KNOCKED OUT TILL TONIGHT!
IRWIN HAD HIS EYE ON THE MIDDLEWEIGHT CROWN, TOO AND HE'S GOING TO WIN IT.
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH BOTTS? HE JUST SITS STARING...
IT'S IRWIN'S GREAT POWER OF CONCENTRATION HE THINKS CONSTANTLY OF STRATEGY!
BATTLING BOTTS, AS THE NEWSPAPERS STARTED TO CALL HIM, TRAINED FOR HIS NEXT FIGHTS SITTING DOWN...
YOU CANNOT LOSE, IRWIN YOU HAVE GREAT COURAGE, IRWIN YOU WILL BE CHAMPION
I CANNOT LOSE..
AFTER HE WON A FEW MORE BOUTS BY ONE PUNCH KAYOES THE PUBLIC CLAMORED FOR A MATCH BETWEEN BOTTS AND PETE JORDAN, THIRD RANKING CONTENDER FOR THE CROWN.
YOU WILL KNOCK JORDAN OUT IRWIN!
I'LL KNOCK JORDAN OUT
KNOCK JORDAN OUT
BOOM!
BATTLING BOTTS SOON DEFEATED ROCKY KNOWLES AND JACK FARLEY AND HE WAS NOW READY TO TAKE ON THE CHAMP, K.O. ROGAN..
ROGAN... IRWIN'S ONLY OBSTACLE TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP
ROGAN DANCED UP TO IRWIN WITH SUPREME CONFIDENCE..
ROGAN SWUNG AND MISSED
IRWIN'S FIST FLASHED OUT SO FAST
THAT ROGAN DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED
THE WINNER AND NEW MIDDLE WEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD, IRWIN BATTLING BOTTS

THE TELETYPE CLACKED OUT ITS CALLS FOR HELP, AND FOUR TIMES THE REPORTER GOT HIS NEWSBEAT BY RUSHING TO THE RESCUE...BUT ASTONISHINGLY, THE PLEA SEEMED TO HAVE COME FROM NOWHERE!

SOMEONE IS CALLING

FRED!
NO
CLACKETY-CLICK! CLACK-CLACK
HA!!?
FRED?
CLACK-CLACK-CLICK!
YES?
LISTEN TO THIS TELETYPE MESSAGE COMING IN, FRED!
CLICKETY CLICKETY CLACKETY CLACK
UH-HUH!
"WE ARE TRAPPED IN MOUNTAIN OUTSIDE OF TOWN! TWO MEN! PLEASE SEND HELP AT ONCE."
CLICK!
UH-HUH!
I WANT THAT STORY, FRED!
OHHH, NO!
SURELY YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SEND ME OUT ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS?
IF THE OTHER PAPERS GET THE BEAT ON US THIS TIME, YOU CAN START LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB!
A STRANGE JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY!!
BUT HOW AM I GOING TO GET UP TO THOSE TWO GUYS?
RENT A SNOW-PLOW!
JUST GET THERE!
AND REMEMBER OUR MOTTO..
"THE MORNING BUGLE... ALWAYS FIRST WITH THE NEWS!"

© 1956 by Canam Publishers Sales Corp.

AYE, THAT IS A MAGN F CENT DIAMOND BUT HAVE YE NO FEAR THAT SOME ONE WILL ROB YOU OF TH S TREASURE?
ROB ME THEY MAY, BUT THERE IS A CURSE ON THIS DIAMOND WHICH WILL DESTROY ANYONE WHO WOULD STEAL IT FROM ME!
A CURSE IS IT? HO. HO. HO! WELL, I'LL TAKE YE. GET ABOARD!
THANK YE! YE'LL NOT REGRET IT!
SEVERAL DAYS PASS... THE MERRIE MAIDE IS WELL AT SEA.....
THAT DIAMOND! I MUST HAVE IT! THE OLD MAN MUST BE UP ON DECK NOW - TAKING HIS WALK! IT'S DARK. A QUICK KNIFE THRUST AND THE DIAMOND IS MINE!
THE WISH IS THE FATHER TO THE DEED: AND SO...
HERE HE COMES! THE DIAMOND WILL BE MINE IN A MOMENT!
AAH!
THERE!
YOU'LL MAKE GOOD FISH BAIT, YOU OLD FOOL!
"The Treasure Keeper" © 1945 by American Boys' Comics, Inc.

my utter astonishment, Bernie Baily told me that Voight had praised it very much when he saw it. And I hadn't thought it had any quality, you know. But I enjoyed doing that dumb story very much.

Then between 1946 and 1949 I did an enormous amount of work for Fawcett Comics, handling two books: *Nyoka* and *Golden Arrow*. If my memory is accurate, these were 32 page books appearing monthly. And although some of the stories were done by another artist whose name I don't know, I believe I handled the chore almost single handed, including the covers. I never signed them; they were hack work of the purest distillation. But they were fun, and helped me learn my trade.

I also did some work for Timely Comics, and then I worked for Rae Herman. I forget the names of the books she put out. The reason I kept changing around at that time is that I was searching for better rates.

After I left Rae Herman I had a studio on 42nd Street between 6th and 7th Avenues that I shared with several other comic book artists. I was then working for Hillman and a few other publishers. And I received a call from somebody named Harvey Kurtzman; and he asked me if I would like to work for him. Now, I had heard of EC, but I didn't know much about them. I knew that Kurtzman was doing interesting work, and that the people with him were doing interesting things, but I felt that the rates that he was able to pay didn't satisfy me; they weren't good enough. I was getting better rates at Hillman, and at Ziff-Davis too. And the work I was doing was very interesting to me at that time. I had what I thought was a reasonable amount of freedom. So I turned Harvey down.

However, I soon became rather turned off with the people I was working for, so I called Harvey up. This was about a year or two later. I asked him if his offer was still good. He told me to come down and meet Bill Gaines, and I did. Harvey was there, Bill was there, and so was Al Feldstein. And that was the beginning of my association with Bill Gaines, although I didn't do anything for Harvey at that time, oddly enough. I started working for the other books.

BENSON: *What about the stories that you did for Atlas after EC, where you did the stories with hundreds of panels?*

KRIGSTEIN: Those were the last things that I did. I thought the plots that Stan Lee was using at the time weren't that bad, but their treatment was very banal. As far as possible I tried to transcend that written treatment to bring out the idea behind the story, and to give them a lighter touch.

I was really writing messages and sending them to sea in a bottle, there. Those stories were my attempt at carrying out an object lesson of how comic stories could be broken down. I used them as a medium for dramatizing the breakdown technique, to show the limitless ways that a comic story could be unfolded. I wanted to show that the form was fluid and dynamic and should not be considered a static form.

BENSON: *It seems you did them very fast.*

KRIGSTEIN: Yes. I spent proportionally more time on the breakdown than on the art.

BENSON: *A vertical splash panel on the right seemed to be a hallmark of those stories.*

KRIGSTEIN: I never liked the idea of the splash panel as a storytelling device. They serve no artistic purpose or dramatic use. There's no reason a story can't start right out with the opening situation, instead of having a big panel first.

BENSON: *There were a number of your EC stories where the first page had six panels or so and no splash panel, which was very unusual for EC. How did that come about? Did you discuss it with Feldstein?*

KRIGSTEIN: I don't remember discussing it with

HERE'S A CRAZY, MIXED-UP FRIGHTMARE I CALL . . .
MURDER DREAM
I WANDERED ABOUT THE LONELY LONDON STREETS TONIGHT, CHILLED TO THE MARROW OF MY BONES BY THE DENSE, DANK, CHOKING FOG.
I WAS MORE TIRED THAN I'D EVER BEEN IN MY LIFE, YET I FEARED SLEEP I FEARED THE DREAM! SOMEWHERE IN THE VAST, GREY, MISTY SHROUD, BIG BEN TOLLED MIDNIGHT...
AT LAST.. TOO EXHAUSTED TO STAND. MY EYES SMARTING BEGGING FOR REST... I RETURNED TO MY BLEAK HOTEL ROOM
UNDRESSED, LEAVING MY CLOTHES WHERE THEY FELL.
. AND SPRAWLED UPON THE BED. .
SLEEP CAME AT ONCE... AND THEN THE DREAM.. THE DREAD DREAM I'VE HAD FOR THE PAST THREE NIGHTS COMES AGAIN. AND I AM POWERLESS TO STOP IT
I AM APPROACHING OUR COTTAGE .. BAGS IN HAND. I AM RETURNING FROM LONDON, MY ABSTIN PARKED OFF THE ROAD. IT'S ALL SO CLEAR. THE SOUND IS SO CLEAR. THE THE SOUND OF CATHY SCREAMING
HOWARD! HELP ME! YAAAAAAHHHH...
© 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines.

Feldstein. My recollection is that I simply did it as part of introducing more panels to expand the action. I found it was easiest to do it on page one, because I felt the splash panel was unnecessary. It was a kind of a cliché thing that people were adhering to unnecessarily.

BENSON: *But how could you have rearranged the stories without cutting them up completely and relaying them out?*

KRIGSTEIN: I don't really recall. Maybe I was given some scripts before the lettering was done. I would have to look at those stories again, and also check out the dates. [*He checks through the stories.*]

First of all, in "Salvage," I divided up the splash panel myself, so we can dispense with that one. That has nothing to do with it. The same thing with "Marbles." And obviously I was given all the stories prelettered.

"Monotony" is the earliest one to come out with a six panel first page, April-May 1954. That's intriguing. Feldstein must have pre-lettered it for me that way. Now, "Master Race" was published March-April 1955, but they held it for about ten months, for an inordinate length of time. Every single one of these other stories must have been laid out while "Master Race" was in the office. They were pre-lettered that way by Feldstein; that's obvious. But they were all done after "Master Race."

The only question I have is about "Monotony." If Feldstein gave me that story before I did "Master Race," then he must take the credit. Because the first page of "Monotony" was an inspiration, although the rest of the story was sheer idiocy. I don't know if my attitude toward it shows up very obviously in the art. But I felt that the first page was a very artistic coup.

I have the records here somewhere as to when I actually did the stories. [*He checks his records.*] "Monotony" was done October 1953, "The Catacombs" was February 1954, and "Master Race" was March 1954. So there you have it. I'd be interested to know whether my mind took off because of "Monotony." It might have, I don't know. Of course, Feldstein was undoubtedly using it as a device to condense the story into fewer pages, not to expand the action of the story.

BENSON: *Did Stan Lee have anything to do with the multiple panels in your stories at Atlas?*

KRIGSTEIN: No, quite the opposite. In fact, there was one time when I handed in one of those stories where I had multiplied panels. And later I received a call from his flunky and was told that Stan wanted to consolidate some of the panels, and add dialogue to those pantomime panels that I had inserted. I refused to give him permission to do so. I was told that Stan had bought the work, and since he 'owned' it he could do whatever he wished with it. My answer was that if any changes were made I would sue. I gave him the option of returning the work, and I think I may have been stupid enough to offer to return the money. In any case the story was published unchanged.

BENSON: *I guess you know that Stan Lee has been the*

JUST HER SPEED
ED STOOD IN THE MIDNIGHT DARKNESS OUTSIDE THE DINER, TREMBLING WITH HATE AND ANGER AND THAT INSANE DESIRE FOR REVENGE THAT HAD BECOME ALMOST AN OBSESSION WITH HIM OVER THE TWO YEARS THAT HE HAD SEARCHED FOR MARTY.
HE WATCHED AS THE TWO TRUCK DRIVERS AT THE COUNTER FINISHED THEIR COFFEE, PUSHED AWAY THEIR CUPS, AND ROSE WEARILY TO THEIR FEET. . HE WATCHED THE MAN BEHIND THE COUNTER SMILE AND NOD GOOD-BYE AND HE FINGERED THE COLD STEEL OF THE 45 IN HIS COAT POCKET. .
HE WAITED UNTIL THEIR TRUCKS HAD GROWLED TO THE ROAD AND ROARED AWAY INTO THE NIGHT. THEN HE STEPPED FROM THE SHADOWS AND MOVED ACROSS THE CRUNCHING GRAVEL PARKING AREA TO THE DINER STOOP
B Krigstein 1954
IT WAS MARTY, ALL RIGHT! HE'D KNOW THAT FACE ANYWHERE! HE'D LOOKED INTO A MILLION OTHER FACES THESE PAST TWO YEARS SEARCHING FOR IT AND NOW HE'D FOUND IT. HE MOUNTED THE STEPS HEAVILY, AND FLUNG OPEN THE DINER DOOR. . .
HELLO, MARTY!
EVENIN'..
MARTY TURNED SLOWLY. . SMILING ABSENTLY WIPING THE CUP HE'D JUST WASHED. THE SMILE FROZE ON HIS TIRED FACE. THE CUP SLIPPED TO THE FLOOR—RACK AND SHATTERED IN A BRITTLE SCREAM.
Y-YOU!
YEAH, MARTY! ME!
THE GUN CAME OUT OF HIS POCKET LIKE A BLACK PANTHER SPRINGING FROM ITS CAVE. MARTY TURNED WHITE, BACKING OFF. . . MUMBLING. . . STUTTERING . . .
WHAT. . . WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, ED?
WHAT DO YOU THINK, MARTY? I'M GONNA KILL YOU!
1
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U-BOAT
THE STEEL CIGAR SHAPES RIPPED FROM THE SHADOWY SUBMERGED HUNTER AND SLICED THROUGH THE GLASSY TURQUOISE SEA
THEIR NEAT WHITE PARALLEL WAKES CHURNING, BORING THE QUIET BRINE AHEAD LUMBERED THE HELPLESS PREY THE LIBERTY SHIP HENRY PEARSON LOOMED LIKE SOME ELEPHANTINE MONSTER AGAINST THE HORIZON PINNED BY THE CROSS LINES ON THE HUNTER'S PERISCOPE ABLE ONLY TO LIE IN WAIT FOR DEATH
AND WHEN DEATH STRUCK THE GREASY HULK ROSE FROM THE SEA WITH A SCREAMING PAINFUL ANIMAL ROAR
THEN THE HUNTER THE U-37 CREPT FROM ITS UNDERSEA HIDING PLACE AND SURFACED. THE HATCH ON THE CONNING TOWER OPENED AND A FIGURE APPEARED. THEN ANOTHER LT. HEINRICH HASS FOLLOWED COMMANDER ERIC VON KROMER DOWN THE LADDER TO THE DECK
IS THERE ANY MORE THRILLING SIGHT, HERR COMMANDER, THAN AN ENEMY IN FLAMES AND SINKING?
FAIR ENOUGH, LT. HASS! I SEE ONLY YOURS WHEN DYING BECAUSE I HAVE DONE MY JOB. AND IT MAKES ME HEARTSICK!
SUDDENLY A PT BOAT APPEARED FROM NOWHERE HURLING ITSELF DIRECTIVELY THROUGH THE CHOPPY SEA TOWARD THE SURFACED U-BOAT.
HERR COMMANDER! LOOK!
NO TIME TO DIVE!
ACHTUNG! GUN CREW ON STATION!
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REVENGE
CAPTAIN WILLIAM WARREN OF THE 97TH PURSUIT SQUADRON, UNITED STATES AIR CORPS WAS A FLYING FOOL WHO CRAFTED AT THE BIT WHEN GERMAN MACHINE GUN SLUGS DOWNED HIS SPAD AND PUT HIM ON THE SHELF WITH A SHATTERED LEG. HE RESENTED THIS ENFORCED INACTIVITY AND LET EVERYONE AT THE BASE HOSPITAL KNOW IT UNTIL ONE DAY
NURSE! NURSE! WHERE IS THAT BLASTED OLD HEN? SHE'S NEVER AROUND WHEN I WANT HER! NURSE! CAN'T YOU HEAR ME? NURSE!
I HEARD YOU CAPTAIN WARREN!
IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU GOT HERE! YOU'RE A HALF HOUR LATE AND CUT
HEY! YOU'RE NOT THE REGULAR NURSE! WHO ARE YOU?
I'M LIEU TENANT ELLEN MACK, LIEUTENANT BOBBY'S REPLACEMENT!
AND I'VE BEEN THOROUGHLY BRIEFED ABOUT YOUR BAD MANNERS, CAPTAIN!
LOOK I'M SORRY! I'M NOT SO BAD! DON'T GET ALONG WITH HOSPITALS, THAT'S ALL!
I'M SURE I'LL GET ALONG WITH YOU, TOO!
I AM SURE YOU WILL TOO, CAPTAIN BECAUSE ANY RECURRENCE OF SUCH CONDUCT WILL BE REPORTED!
NOW, LET ME HELP YOU INTO THE WHEEL CHAIR AND I'LL TAKE YOU OUT ON THE TERRACE. THERE ARE OTHER PATIENTS WHO REQUIRE MY ATTENTION
YES MA'AM
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KNOW-NOTHING
THERE'S A SAYING THAT STILL WORKS ON DEEP, OFTEN, BENEATH A SEEMINGLY UNEDUCATED EXTERIOR. THERE IS A BASIC WISDOM AND INTENSE PATRIOTISM IN SIMPLE BACKWOODS FOLK. THIS STORY WILL ILLUSTRATE THAT FACT. IT BEGAN ON A NIGHT IN 1795 WHEN JOHN WERNER STEPPED THROUGH THE DOOR OF BRIAM MACRUCE'S HIGHLAND COTTAGE
AND STARTLED THE ELDERLY SCOTTISH PEASANT WHO TURNED IN SURPRISE FROM HIS HEARTH
YOU WILL MAKE NO OUTCRY! YOU WILL REACH FOR NO WEAPON!
TO SEE THE PISTOL AIMED AT HIS HEAD.
REFUSE TO DO EXACTLY AS I SAY, AND I WILL BE FORCED TO KILL
© 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines.

spearhead of the so-called current revitalization of comics.

KRIGSTEIN: I'm delighted to learn that. Twenty years of unrelenting editorial effort to encourage miserable taste and to flood the field with degraded imitations and non-stories have certainly qualified him for that respected position.

BENSON: *He uses a new method of having the artist help plot the story, and lay out the whole story using the pictures and sequencing he wants, and then the dialogue is added between the pencilling and the inking.*

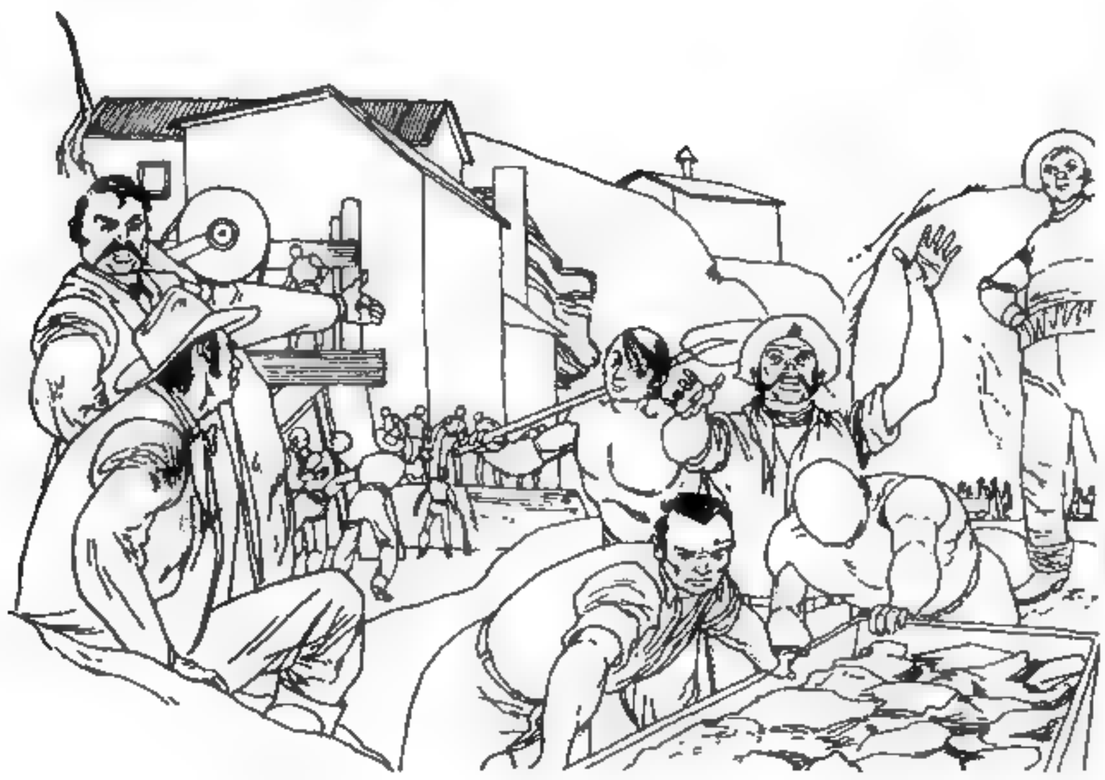
KRIGSTEIN: That's a remarkably prophetic artistic method—prophecy projected backwards, that is, to the beginnings of comics. This was the method they used in the beginning, when the form was so primitive that the mere existence of pictorial movement was sufficient to win the reader's interest, and the dialogue could be so elementary that it didn't interfere with the action of the chase. Shades of the earliest movies! In other words, the esthetic of comics as 'action' of the most infantile kind is still with us. My futile idea was that action in comics, as in any art, doesn't end with one person pounding another person in the jaw. There's also the action of emotion, psychology, character and idea.

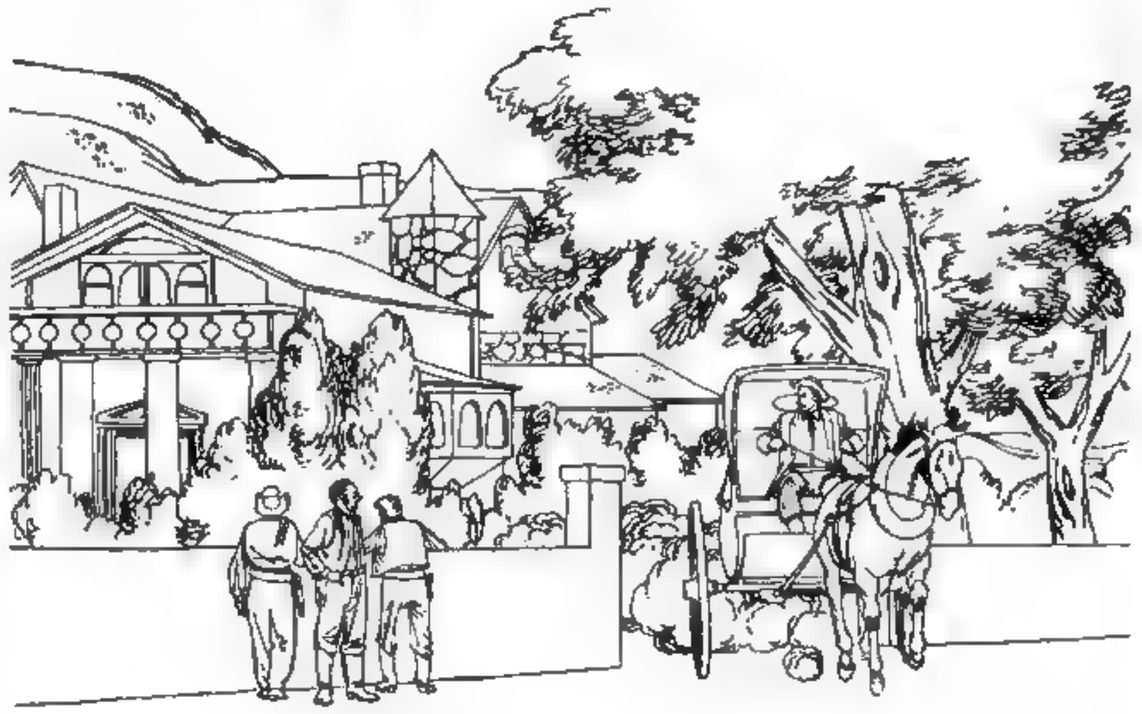
BENSON: *Do you still read any comics?*

KRIGSTEIN: No. What you say about the increasing interest in comics seems to coincide with a *decrease* on my part. I'm afraid I've lost interest in doing anything in the comics form. Right now I'm too involved in painting. I'm glad I did what I did in comics; but as for doing anything new, I don't think so.

BENSON: *I'll bet the popularity of the Pop Art painters really gets under your skin.*

KRIGSTEIN: Pop Art has made visible an underground interest among intellectuals in the going popular arts as an important social phenomenon. Despite all the public protestation of the Pop Artists, there is an inherent criticism in





MME IRENE
DIRECT
FROM PARIS
in ARIAS
from the
OPERES

their art. Some artists criticise by emphasizing the ludicrous in their object of criticism, that is to say, total acceptance and identification with what is vile. The uglier, stupider and more banal the source, the more useful it is as a subject of Pop Art. For the new comics fans, the worse the comics, the more titillating the pleasure, the more campy it is. Of course, among the so called Pop Artists there are those that are more aggressively critical. The sculptor Segal is an example. The more overt the criticism, the more I like it.

Obviously, my approach was quite different. I was attracted to the possibility of using a popular form in an effort to cast it into classic proportions. The idea of attempting to harmonize popularity with monumentality has always attracted me.

STEWART: *Why is it that you never wrote a script for EC? Did you submit some?*

KRIGSTEIN: No I didn't. I was so busy exploring the artistic end of it that I was never interested in exploring any other avenue at the time. I only wrote that script I showed you because I wanted to illustrate a particular kind of story, and you might say it was merely out of desperation that I turned upon myself as a source.

But one has to realize that it is not necessarily true that the best work is produced by an artist-writer, any more than it is true that the best operas are produced by the best composer-writers. The analogy between comics and another art to me is just as frequent with opera as it is with movies. It's a pertinent analogy because a comic story is a composition that is visual and extremely musical. Because of the rhythmic content of it, the element of timing is profoundly important. That's what, to me, brings comics very close to opera. Now there have been composers who wrote their own lyrics, like Wagner. But Wagner wasn't necessarily the greatest opera writer.

But even with movies, a director *can* be a writer, but great movies are not necessarily produced by director-writers. Many are produced by directors that have other texts that they are working with. If we limited ourselves to that esthetic, we would then have to dismiss all of the great directors who didn't write.

There's another aspect of it. When an artist-writer combination exists, he writes for his own weaknesses as well as his own strengths. So that he can very carefully organize the totality to take account of his weaknesses. This doesn't have to fit into the scheme of a person who just writes or who just draws.

Which is not to say that an artist-writer couldn't create something just as important as an artist and a writer could. There's no innate superiority either way.

BENSON: *But it seems to me that sometimes you were inhibited in doing what you wanted to do because of the writers you were working with. Didn't you feel any kind of a need to work in closer collaboration with the writers than you did?*

KRIGSTEIN: No. My feeling was that good stories were available. Very fine stories were easily available.

BENSON: *You mean that you were getting good stories?*

KRIGSTEIN: No. I mean that if somebody wanted good stories, there would be good stories in plenty. That would not be a problem if they were wanted. That's why I never felt that it was necessary for me to write the kind of stories that I wanted.

BENSON: *But very often comic writers were not aware of the problems an artist might have. For example, the story might have excessive dialogue, with nothing happening.*

KRIGSTEIN: No. That was not a problem, because that could be manipulated. I remember that when I worked for Cronin, he was getting very fine stories, and they were not written perfectly for the artist, but I could still manipulate the panels. And I remember rewriting panels, and it was permissible, it was very acceptable. So therefore I never felt chained.

BENSON: *So when you had the freedom to rework it, that*

The ideology of commercial comics is to rationalize the cliche as being spontaneous, and to brand deeply felt "high art"—Renaissance art, for example—as being "intellectual."

But spontaneity is expression unhampered by ineptitude; it is natural and unforced and happens when mastery has been achieved. The great Oriental masters of the brush found spontaneity only after many years of observation and rigorous study. Merely because spontaneous material and hack work are both quickly done does *not* mean that the two can be equated.

There is a school of comic book criticism that conceives of comics as the repository of all the rejected values of "fine" art, and sees merit in that status. And it is true that in being a literary form, comics fills the gap left by modernist art with its emphasis away from subject matter, and fulfills the values abandoned by non-literary abstract art. It nevertheless has available to it all the tradition and culture of hundreds of years of literal story-telling art. It is this tradition which bears the possibility of real feeling, in contrast to the hackneyed cliches that comics are filled with. In rejecting the abstract, there is no need for comics to embrace the cliche.

was sufficient to . . .

KRIGSTEIN: No, it was *not* sufficient. This is the point that I want to make, that despite that, there was a much larger inhibition operating.

Actually, when I was working for Cronin, I did tell him I wanted to write stories. And he said, "Fine." And I said, "I want to do Shakespeare for you." He said, "Excellent, go ahead and write it and submit something to me." And I began doing it and talking to him, and as I talked with him, I began coming out of my fantasy that anything could be done, and I began to recognize the reality of the space limitations that were being imposed; that no matter how good a writer you had—Shakespeare, for example—the restrictions in space were so great that you couldn't do anything with it anyway.

So what I'm saying is that the problem was not good writers. The problem was the same that I ran into with Bill with "Master Race." It was exactly that problem.

BENSON: *Hillman seemed to have stories that were superior generally to most comic stories.*

KRIGSTEIN: Cronin gave me very good stories. I remember a western I did for him that I thought was very good, and it was one where I made some changes in the script. The story had a gun battle on a wooden pathway across a muddy street; that's all I remember about it.

BENSON: *Eisner and Kurtzman were two writer-artists who, it seems, consciously allowed themselves to be influenced by movies. Eisner had a very visual style.*

KRIGSTEIN: I never could become very interested in Eisner. His work depended so much on shortcuts and cliches.

BENSON: *In what way?*

KRIGSTEIN: Quite aside from his cliches of plot and characters, Eisner absolutely accepted the conventions of cartooning; he lived by those conventions. And for good or ill, I never wanted to accept any conventions of cartooning for my work. I felt that if I had a contribution to make, it was to point out that the comic strip need not rest with the conventions of cartooning, that the possibilities are far deeper.

Now, from another point of view, to remain within the conventions of cartooning is also a very beautiful thing. Great cartoonists need do nothing more than be themselves as cartoonists, and they will always remain great. All I can say is that my spontaneous reaction to Eisner's style was that it was unattractive to me. There's something about his work that lacked that kind of original charm as a cartoonist, even.

I feel that the Eisner style of breakdown is good, but it has important limitations. And the same is true of Kurtzman. They look bright and clever, and they're different, they're far more interesting than a conventional comic story in many ways; and they can do more, they can do far more.

But, despite that, they are still limited. They do not go deeply enough into the psychological feeling of the story. I haven't seen their work for years. But my reaction was that they were clever and bright, but superficial, and I always had ambitions for comics to scramble out of that superficiality.

Now in regard to Kurtzman's visual style . . . I think he was trying for different effects than I was. I didn't want a picture version of time, where the camera is going closer, where Kurtzman repeated panels, each closer to an object. That is not comics and that is not pictures, because pictures do not relate to one another in that way. I wanted each panel to be a separate picture, and I didn't want the repeating panels to blend together like a film. Because you're *not* looking at a motion picture. Comics are not a motion picture. They're closer to a single painting than they are to a motion picture.

BENSON: *Isn't the whole page a unit of time?*

KRIGSTEIN: Kurtzman's pages, like Simon and Kirby's pages are not really composed spatially. They are total in another way. Now they are great; now Simon and Kirby is great. But I am not thinking of composing a page that way. If you take apart a Kurtzman page or an Eisner page and look at a single panel, the single panel falls. It can only exist as a total page. The Eisner panel as an individual panel cannot exist by itself without its surrounding page. It exists only as a page because they exist in time like a movie. They are held together by a sequence of actions.

The panel has to exist by itself, otherwise the integrity of the art is in jeopardy. Until the artist arrives at the point where he realizes that by drawing a single panel he has a single work of art that exists by itself as a single statement which can live by itself, only then can all the panels live together. And then you reach a totality that is completely out of the realm of the infantile kind of page continuities that comics are filled with.

Each panel must exist by itself. And the thing that makes a comic page different from every other day in the year is that each of these individual works of art, at the same time as they have a totally individual life of their own, also exist as a total group, as a unit. This was my inspiring motivation in doing comics. If you can pull out your panel and frame it, exhibit it as a panel, and then have the reader unconscious of that as he's reading the totality, then you've done something, in my estimation. You've raised comic book art to the level of Goya, if you can achieve that. ■■

THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE

(HENRY FLEMING HAS DESERTED HIS UNIT, AND, AFTER WANDERING AROUND IN THE REAR, REJOINS IT. HE HAS WITNESSED THE DEATH OF HIS COMRADE JIM CONKLIN, WHICH HAS ADDED TO HIS GUILTY BURDEN. WILSON (THE SENTRY) IS THE FORMER LOUD AND BOASTFUL SOLDIER, NOW CHASTENED. HENRY'S BLOODY HEAD WOUND IS ACTUALLY THE RESULT OF A BLOW FROM THE RIFLE OF A FELLOW YANK. THIS BREAKDOWN COVERS P. 149 thru 169, Modern LIBRARY EDITION.

HE SWUNG UNSTEADILY TOWARDS THE FIRE...

OF A SUDDEN HE CONFRONTED A BLACK AND MONSTROUS FIGURE.

HALT! HALT!

WHY, HELLO, WILSON, YOU — YOU HERE?

THAT YOU, HENRY?

YES IT'S — IT'S ME.

night — woods

Wilson lowers rifle

WELL, WELL, OL' BOY — BY GINGER, I'M GLAD T'SEE YEH! I THOUGHT YEH WAS DEAD SURE ENOUGH!

YES, YES. I'VE — I'VE HAD AN AWFUL TIME

I'VE BEEN ALL OVER. WAY OVER ON THE RIGHT. TER'BLE FIGHTIN' OVER THERE. I HAD AN AWFUL TIME.

I GOT SEP'RATED FROM THE REG'MENT. OVER ON THE RIGHT, I GOT SHOT IN TH' HEAD. I NEVER SEE SECH FIGHTIN' AWFUL TIME. I DON'T SEE HOW I COULD'A GOT SEP'RATED FROM THE REG'MENT. I GOT SHOT, TOO.

WHO YEH TALKIN' TO, WILSON?

WILSON, RESTRAINED JOY

HENRY SHEEPISH

HENRY, ANIMATEDLY.

HENRY PAUSES, DOES WILSON BELIEVE HIM?

HENRY PUTS HAND TO HEAD

WILSON SYMPATHETIC

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RETURN II

WHO YEH TALKIN' TO? YEH THE DERNDEST SENTINEL — WHY — HELLO, HENRY, YIV HERE? WHY I THOUGHT YOU WAS DEAD FOUR HOURS AGO! GREAT JERUSALEM, THEY KEEP TURNIN' UP EVERY TEN MINUTES OR SO! WHERE WAS YEH?

OVER ON TH' RIGHT. I GOT SEPARATED—

SCOLDING CORPORAL

HENRY

WILSON (SENTINEL)

YES, AN' HE GOT SHOT IN THE HEAD! GEE, IT MUST HURT LIKE THUNDER!

WILSON

HENRY, BLOODY

YES IT HURTS — HURTS A GOOD DEAL.

COME ON, HENRY, I'LL TAKE KEER 'A YEH.

WILSON LOOKS ON AS —

HENRY IS LED AWAY BY —

CORPORAL

"PUT 'IM TO SLEEP IN MY BLANKET," CALLED OUT WILSON. "AN' — HOL' ON A MINNIT — HERE'S MY CANTEEN. IT'S FULL 'A COFFEE. LOOK AT HIS HEAD BY THE FIRE, AN' SEE HOW IT LOOKS. WHEN I GET RELIEVED IN A COUPLE 'A MINNITS, I'LL BE OVER AN' SEE T' HIM."

* * * * *

(HENRY)

Continue —

HE STARED WITH A VACANT LOOK INTO THE FIRE.

HE SAW THAT THE GROUND WAS CLUTTERED WITH MEN.

(MEN AND EQUIPMENT SPRAWLED OVER GROUND MANY FIGURES IN FOREST)

THEIR FACES EXPRESSED IN THEIR LINES THE DEEP STUPOR OF THE TIRED SOLDIERS.

THIS BIT OF FOREST MIGHT HAVE APPEARED AS A SCENE OF SOME FRIGHTFUL DEBAUCH.

(SWEATED, FILTHY, BEARDED FACES.)

OCCASIONALLY A SOLDIER AROUSED AND TURNED HIS BODY TO A NEW POSITION...

AH, UH, oh-oh mmm

...THE EXPERIENCE OF HIS SLEEP HAVING TAUGHT HIM OF UNEVEN AND OBJECTIONABLE PLACES ON THE GROUND.

(SOLDIER)

OR PERHAPS HE WOULD LIFT HIMSELF TO A SITTING POSTURE, BLINK AT THE FIRE AN UNINTELLIGENT MOMENT...

...THEN CUDDLE DOWN AGAIN WITH A GRUNT OF SLEEPY CONTENT.

(SOLDIER)

WELL, NOW, HENRY OL' BOY, WE'LL HAVE YEH FIXED UP IN JEST ABOUT A MINUTE

(WILSON, WITH CANTEEN)

(HENRY TURNS TO HIM)

THERE - YEH LOOK LIKE THE DEVIL, BUT I BET YEH FEEL BETTER.

(WILSON)

(HENRY, HEAD BANDAGED)

YEH DON'T HOLLER NER SAY NOTHIN'. I KNOW I'M A BLACKSMITH AT TAKIN' KEER A SICK FOLKS, AN' YEH NEVER SQUEAKED.

(WILSON)

PRESENTLY HE STOOPED AND PICKED UP HIS BLANKETS

THERE NOW, LIE DOWN AN' GET SOME SLEEP.

(WILSON SPREADS BLANKET OVER RECLINING HENRY)

WELL, BUT HOL' ON A MINNIT - WHERE YEH GOIN' TO SLEEP?

SHET UP AN' GO ON T' SLEEP. DON'T BE MAKIN' A DAMN FOOL A YERSELF.

(HENRY)

(WILSON, BACK TURNED)

PANEL CAPTION: AFTER THE REPROOF THE YOUTH SAID NO MORE. AN EXQUISITE DROWSINESS HAD SPREAD THROUGH HIM. THE WARM COMFORT OF THE BLANKET ENVELOPED HIM AND MADE A GENTLE LANGUOR. HIS HEAD FELL FORWARD ON HIS CROOKED ARM AND HIS WEIGHTED LIDS WENT SLOWLY DOWN OVER HIS EYES.

RETURN IV

THE DISTANCE WAS SPLINTERING AND BLARING WITH THE NOISE OF FIGHTING.

(HENRY, THE MORNING SUN)

HIS EYES SPREAD OVER THE MASS OF MEN THICK SPREAD UPON THE GROUND, PALLID, AND IN STRANGE POSTURES.

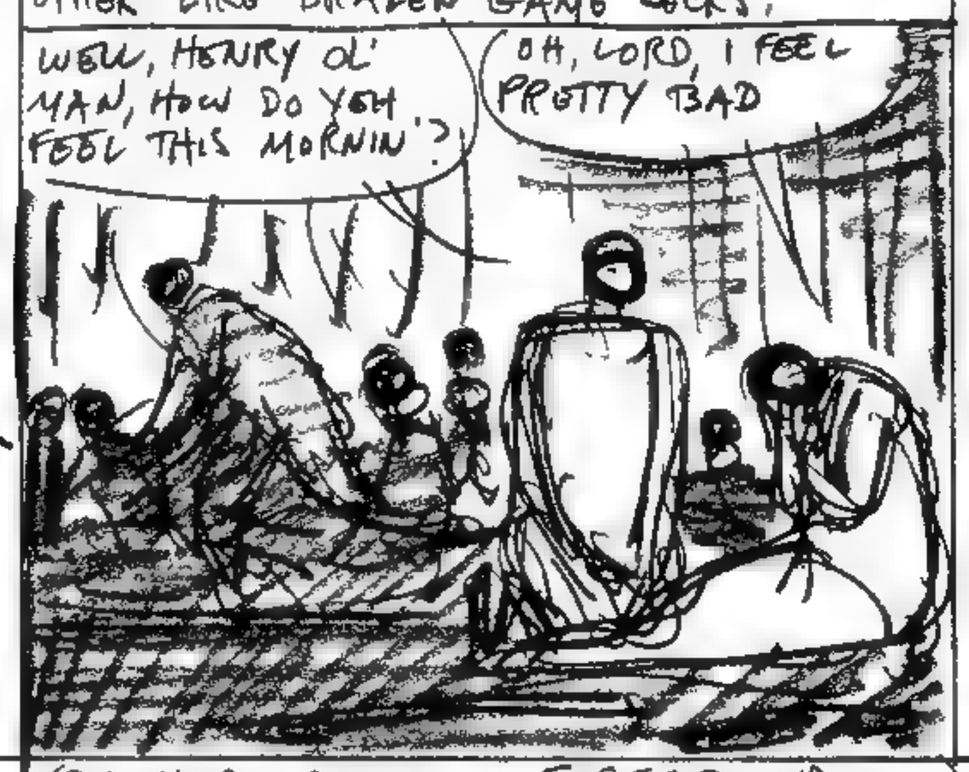
HE STARTED UP WITH A LITTLE CRY. HIS DISORDERED MIND INTERPRETED THE HALL OF THE FOREST AS A CHARNEL PLACE.

(HENRY, LOOKING UPON THE WIERDLY SPRAWLED SLEEPERS. RISING SUN.

SUDDENLY THERE WAS A HOLLOW RUMBLE OF DRUMS. A DISTANT BUGLE SANG FAINTLY.

(HENRY, RISING)

SIMILAR SOUNDS CAME FROM NEAR AND FAR OVER THE FOREST. THE BUGLES CALLED TO EACH OTHER LIKE BRAZEN GAME COCKS.



(BACKGROUND - AWAKENING CAMP

FOREGROUND— WILSON, SOLICITOUS HENRY, SELF-PITYING

WELL, WELL, COME NOW AN' GIT SOME GRUB. THEN MAYBE YE'LL FEEL BETTER.

AT THE FIRESIDE, THE LOUD YOUNG SOLDIER WATCHED OVER HIS COMRADE'S WANTS WITH TENDERNESS AND CARE.

(WILSON PREPARES FOOD)

THE YOUTH TOOK NOTE OF A REMARKABLE CHANGE IN HIS COMRADE. HE WAS NO MORE A LOUD YOUNG SOLDIER.

YER CHANGED A GOOD BIT. YEH AIN'T AT ALL LIKE YEH WAS.

(HENRY)

THAT'S TRUE ENOUGH.

(WILSON)

AT THE FIRE

WILSON POURED COFFEE FROM A SMALL AND SOOTY TIN PAIL.

JIM CONKLIN'S DEAD

HENRY

WHAT? IS HE? JIM CONKLIN?

WILSON

YES, HE'S DEAD. SHOT IN THE SIDE.

YEH DON'T SAY SO. JIM CONKLIN... POOR CUSS...

HENRY

WILSON

THE REG'MENT LOST OVER HALF THE MEN YESTIRDAY. I THOUGHT A COURSE THEY WAS ALL DEAD, BUT, LAWS, THEY KEP' A-COMIN' BACK LAST NIGHT UNTIL IT SEEMS, AFTER ALL, WE DIDN'T LOSE BUT A FEW.

WILSON

THEY BEEN SCATTERED ALL OVER, WANDERIN' AROUND IN THE WOODS, FIGHTIN WITH OTHER REG'MENTS AN' EVERYTHING. JEST LIKE YOU DONE.

SO?

WILSON, GENTLY

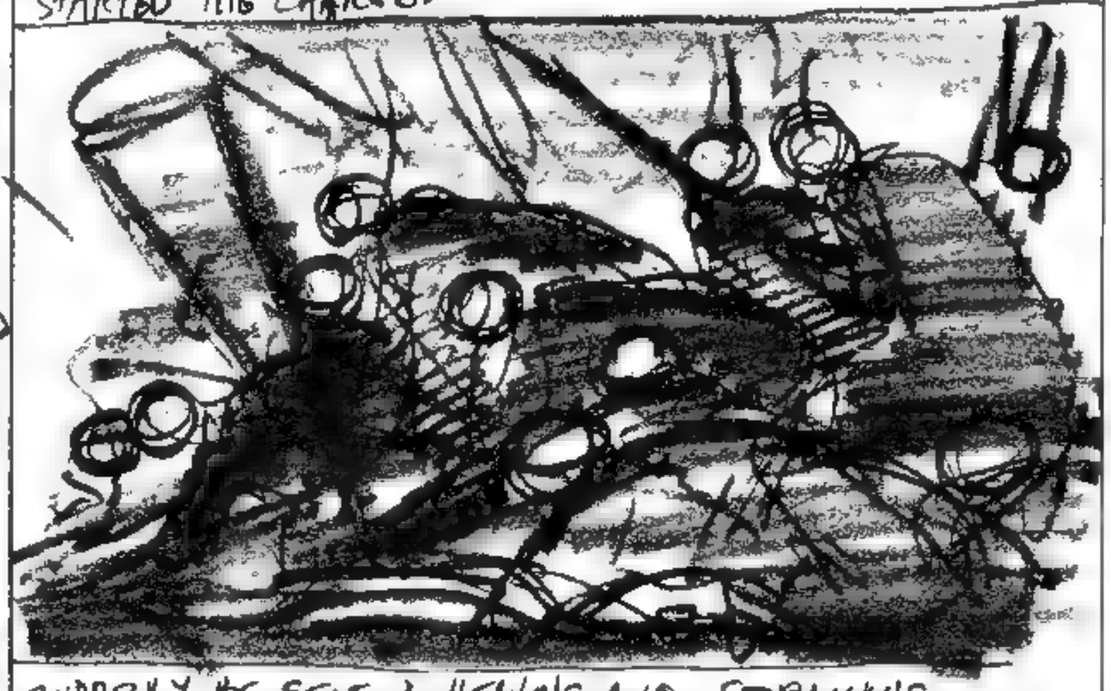
HENRY

THE ASSAULT I

(from p. 206 Modern Library Edition)

THE YOUTH STARED AT THE LAND IN FRONT OF HIM. ITS FOLIAGE NOW SEEMED TO VEIL POWERS AND HORRORS.

HE WAS UNAWARE OF THE MACHINERY OF ORDERS THAT STARTED THE CHARGE.



SUDDENLY HE FELT A HEAVING AND STRAINING AMONG THE MEN.

(MEN STRUGGLE TO RISE)

THE LINE FELL SLOWLY FORWARD LIKE A TOPPLING WALL, AND, WITH A CONVULSIVE GASP THAT WAS INTENDED FOR A CHEER, THE REGIMENT BEGAN ITS JOURNEY.

(MASSIVE SHOT OF TRANCE-LIKE CHARGE)

THE YOUTH WAS PUSHED AND JOSTLED.

HE LUNGED AHEAD AND BEGAN TO RUN

Divided into 2 panels

HE FIXED HIS EYE UPON A DISTANT CLUMP OF TREES.

HE RAN TOWARD IT AS A GOAL.

IT WAS MERELY A QUESTION OF GETTING OVER AN UNPLEASANT MATTER.

HE RAN DESPARATELY

OUT INTO A CLEARED SPACE.

THE REGIMENT SWUNG FROM ITS POSITION

BOTTOM CAP: THE WOODS AND THICKETS BEFORE IT AWAKENED

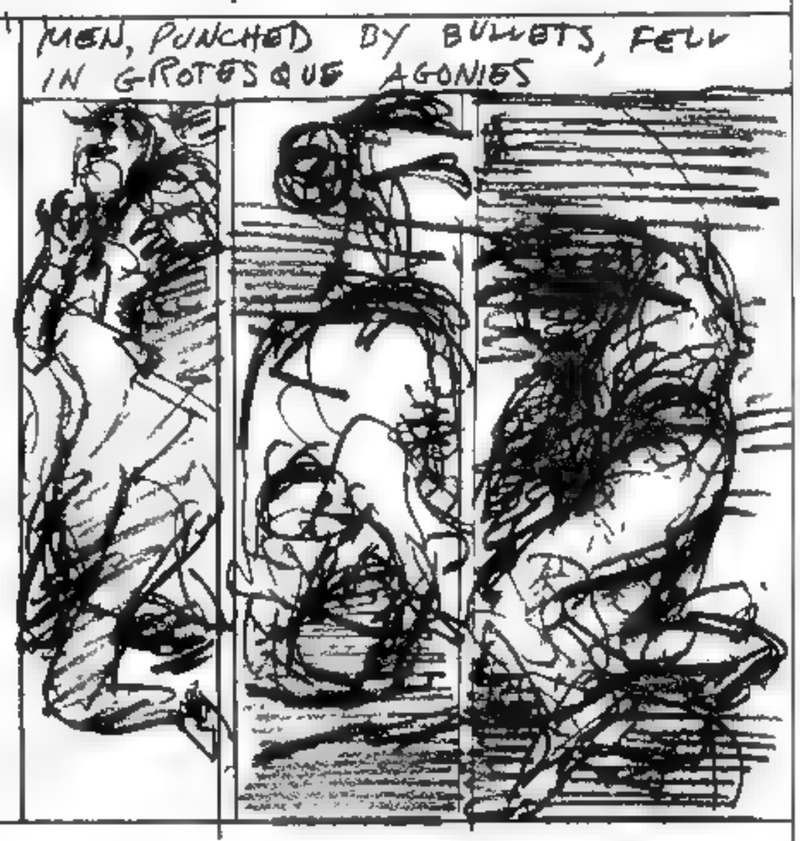
OMIT CAP?

THE FOREST MADE TREMENDOUS OBJECTION

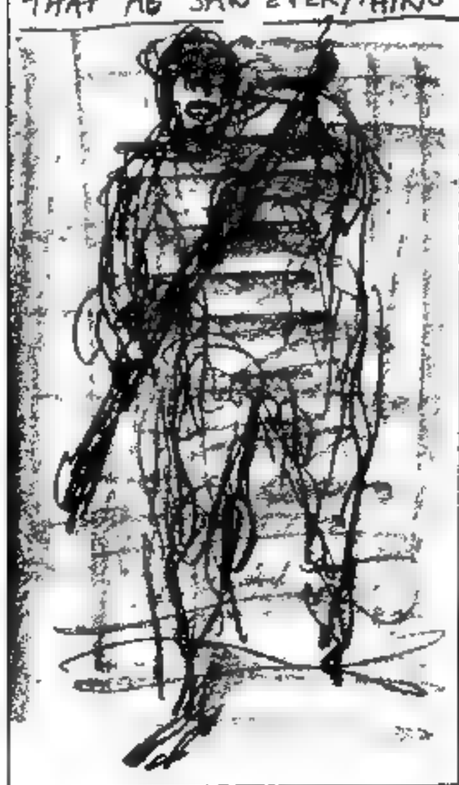
(SMOKE EMANATES FROM FOREST. TINY FIGURES OF ATTACKING REGIMENT

(EXPLODING SHELL

MEN, PUNCHED BY BULLETS, FELL IN GROTESQUE AGONIES

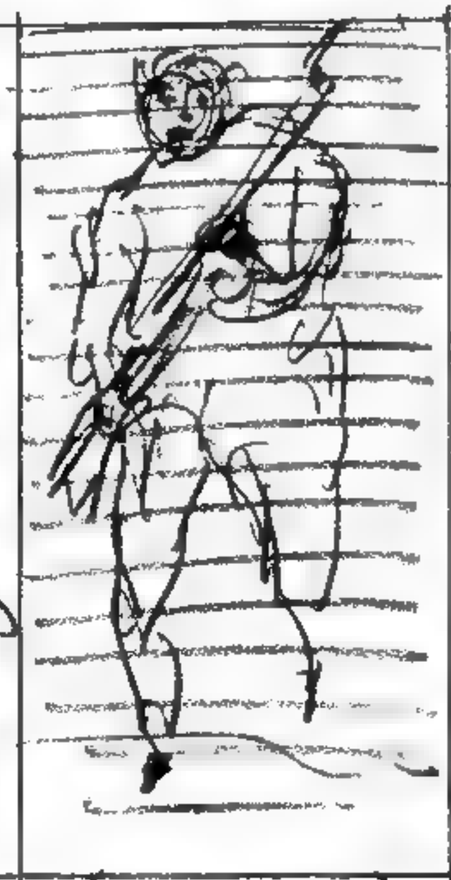


IT SEEMED TO THE YOUTH THAT HE SAW EVERYTHING



SOME MEN MADLY WORKING AT A BATTERY WERE PLAIN TO HIM

(FRENZIED SCENE, REBEL GUNNERS — SMOKE



(REPEAT YOUTH

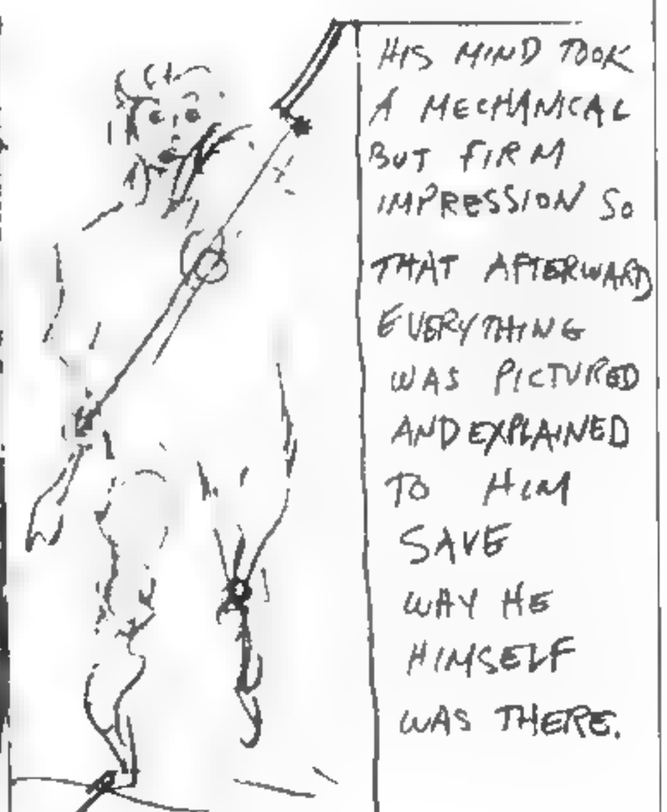
THE BROWN OR GREY TRUNKS OF THE TREES SHOWED EACH ROUGHNESS OF THEIR SURFACE.

(FOREST, SMOKE FROM REBEL RIFLES

THE ASSAULT IV

MEN WITH STARTING EYES AND SWEATING FACES.. RUNNING MADLY..!
FALLING...
THROWN HEADLONG.
(REPEAT YOUTH)
(REPEAT [ENLARGED] FALLEN FIGURE OF PRECEEDING PANEL

THERE WAS A FRENZY MADE FROM THE FURIOUS RUSH THE MEN, PITCHED FORWARD INSANELY, BURST INTO CHEERINGS, MOBLIKE AND BARBARIC
IT MADE A MAD ENTHUSIASM THAT, IT SEEMED, COULDN'T BE CHECKED BY GRANITE OR BRASS.


HIS MIND TOOK A MECHANICAL BUT FIRM IMPRESSION SO THAT AFTERWARD EVERYTHING WAS PICTURED AND EXPLAINED TO HIM SAVE WAY HE HIMSELF WAS THERE.
(REPEAT YOUTH)

AN EXAMINATION OF "MASTER RACE"

© 1976 by Wm. M. Gaines.

by John Benson, David Kasakove and Art Spiegelman

Bernard Krigstein's "Master Race" is one of the finest stories ever to appear in the comics form. It is a comic book rarity; a story with such density and breadth of technique that it merits a detailed and exhaustive examination on the part of the reader. Partly because of the nature of the industry most comic book stories, even the good ones, contain nothing beyond that which is immediately apparent to the casual reader. But "Master Race" has layers of meaning and detail both in its form and visual content which will yield the alert reader new enjoyment *beyond* the immediately apparent with each rereading. What follows is not a definitive analysis, but merely the results of one such examination.

Although this article confines its attention to the art, one must bear in mind that the text of "Master Race" was written as it was printed before the artist ever saw it. No one at this date can recall who wrote the original script, but editor Albert Feldstein did enough rewriting for his style to be apparent.

It is a powerful narrative, using the most dramatic events of this century as a backdrop for the brief confrontation of two antagonists. Obviously it was the basic narrative that inspired the artist to make this story the classic that it is. But it is just as obvious that it is the artist's contribution that lifts the story out of the context of the twist ending comic book story and makes it a memorable artistic experience.

In fact, much of the power that Krigstein brings to the story is due to his choice of a style which is the antithesis of standard comics storytelling. Instead of employing the exaggerated visual comic book phrases usually used to clearly denote action and emotion (speed lines, large beads of sweat, etc.), Krigstein uses a much more objective standard of delineation. Instead of frequent close-ups, an often used technique to get "close" to a character's feelings, Krigstein keeps a physical distance from the characters. Instead of using "dramatic" motion picture type lighting effects, Krigstein uses patterns of dark and light in much more abstract ways. Instead of a humanizing use of free shapes, Krigstein concentrates on using sharp angles and straight lines wherever possible.

Finally, in opposition to the cartoonist's approach, there is the chilling, aloof, precise, clean rendering which is used throughout the story. In this contrast between the apparently detached style and the extreme emotional content of the story lies the strength of Krigstein's interpretation. The distancing allows a perspective that illuminates the events and forces a deeper, more introspective, analysis.

The story is composed of three well defined sections; an initial confrontation, a long flashback, and the denouement. The first section sets the mood of the story; the depiction of routine city life is coupled with a developing sense of unease.

Page 1 appears simple enough; six panels of equal width show a man purchasing a subway token and waiting on the platform. The panel symmetry reminds one of the opening page of Krigstein's earlier story "Monotony," in which he used the design to satirize the story's title. On a closer look within the panels, however, great differences between the two stories emerge. Though the page structure in both cases denotes order, the "Monotony" panels have a light, airy atmosphere, with simple compositions, while the "Master Race" panels are dark and foreboding, and are infinitely more complex.

In panel 1 the protagonist Reissman is seen from beneath, making his descent from light into the blackness that dominates the panel. The subway locale is an important element of the story, and both the angle and the dominant black are the first signals of Krigstein's vision of the subway as a dramatic cavern.

Although the change attendant is the one in a cage, it is Reissman who is seen behind bars and wire in panel 2, his eyes shrouded in shadow, in contrast to the innocently lit attendant. His cold expression is inked with thick blacks, not the more delicate rendering used for the attendant. In panel 3, Reissman's face is still deep in shadow although one can see the full faces of the strangers around him. The composition frames Reissman against a bank of bars with a heavy black

mass hanging over his head. Such compositional touches reinforce the text's description of Reissman as a man haunted by memories of horrors.

In panel 4, the rails sweep ahead of the train in a powerful three-dimensional arc, shattering the calm vertical and horizontal composition just as the scream of the wheels "shatter the silence."[1] As Reissman has entered the story alone in the first panel, so the train, an important entity in the story, enters alone in the panel below. In panel 5 the viewpoint shifts to include the platform, so that Reissman and the train are now in confrontation.

It is worthwhile noting the differences between panels 4 and 5. In panel 4 both the track and ceiling are curved, a sense of depth is achieved through a careful use of dark shadows, and the side pillars are realistically depicted. While there is some feeling of depth in panel 5, it is composed of straight lines, no blacks, and almost abstract patterns on the wall to the right. There is a feeling of compression in panel 5 due to the fact that the principal perspective line, the edge of the platform, is absolutely vertical. Both panels create a sense of depth, although the methods used are quite different. In panel 4 the reader's eyes are led into the panel, whereas in panel 5, one's eyes are led outside the panel, the forward motion of the train threatening to go beyond the surface of the page.

The two panels are separate pictorial entities, and although they create a strong dual staccato punch, it is caused by an interrelationship that is wholly different and more complex than the standard comics "cinematic" device of repeating an identical scene for two panels, with an object or person moving closer in the second panel.

Krigstein makes a sudden switch from the depiction of depth in panels 4 and 5 to total two-dimensionality in panel 6, wonderfully reconstructing the actual shock a person gets when he views a train approach and subsequently pass directly in front of him.

Though not immediately apparent, the relationship of panel 6 to panel 5 completes the relationship of panel 5 to panel 4. In these three panels Krigstein observes the geometric ratio of the increase in size of an onrushing train (the ratio of the window sizes is 2 : 5 : 30). Many artists, though composing the panels differently, might use this geometric increase in *size*. The interesting element here is that Krigstein has used the same geometric ratio for the sensation of *depth*—going from a strong illusion of depth, to a slightly more compressed image, to an absolutely flat two-dimensional composition.[2]

The flatness in panel 6 is intensified by the multiple—"unrealistic"—images of the passengers. These multiple images simultaneously serve several other purposes. First, they very successfully reproduce the stroboscopic effect a person gets when standing close to a moving train. Second, having used the device on page one, he is able effortlessly to indicate the slowing of the train in the next panel (page 2, panel 1) by showing only two multiple images. This also creates a strong continuity which bridges the turning of the page. Finally, its distinctive quality is such that the use of the same technique on the last page of the story creates a strong coda. So the multiple images are not merely a flashy device,

MASTER RACE
YOU CAN NEVER FORGET, CAN YOU, CARL REISSMAN? EVEN HERE IN AMERICA TEN YEARS AND THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY FROM YOUR NATIVE GERMANY . . YOU CAN NEVER FORGET THOSE BLOODY WAR YEARS. THOSE MEMORIES WILL HAUNT YOU FOREVER... AS EVEN NOW THEY HAUNT YOU WHILE YOU DESCEND THE SUBWAY STAIRS INTO THE QUIET SEMI-DARKNESS..
YOUR ACCENT IS STILL THICK ALTHOUGH YOU HAVE MASTERED THE LANGUAGE OF YOUR NEW COUNTRY THAT TOOK YOU IN WITH OPEN ARMS WHEN YOU FINALLY ESCAPED FROM BELSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP. YOU SLIDE THE BILL UNDER THE BARRED CHANGE BOOTH WINDOW. . .
TWO TOKENS, PLEASE.
YOU MOVE TO THE BUSY CLICKING TURNSTILES. SLIP THE SHINY TOKEN INTO THE THIN SLOT. . AND PUSH THROUGH
THE TRAIN ROARS OUT OF THE BLACK CAVERN SHATTERING THE SILENCE OF THE ALMOST DESERTED STATION
YOU STARE AT THE ONRUSHING STEEL MONSTER . .
YOU BLINK AS THE FIRST CAR RUSHES BY AND ILLUMINATED WINDOWS FLASH IN AN EVER SLOWING RHYTHM. .
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but serve very practical dramatic purposes.

In panel 2 of the second page, Reissman is again enveloped in shadow, his hunched back and shoulders a mass of black that dominates the panel. The contrast to the affable mild mannered face of the emerging passenger, seen fully lit from front view, is clear; the passenger is "free," Reissman is not, in spite of his attempts to convince himself otherwise.

It is not until panel 3 that we first see Reissman's eyes, and here his character is shown in another way; a dozing mask hiding the fear that his hunched body and upturned collar can not. The diagonal that is created by his arm pressed to his face subtly suggests the difference between the neutral surroundings and Reissman's own tensions. Here and in panel 5 the panel edges seem to be claustrophobically squeezing in on him.

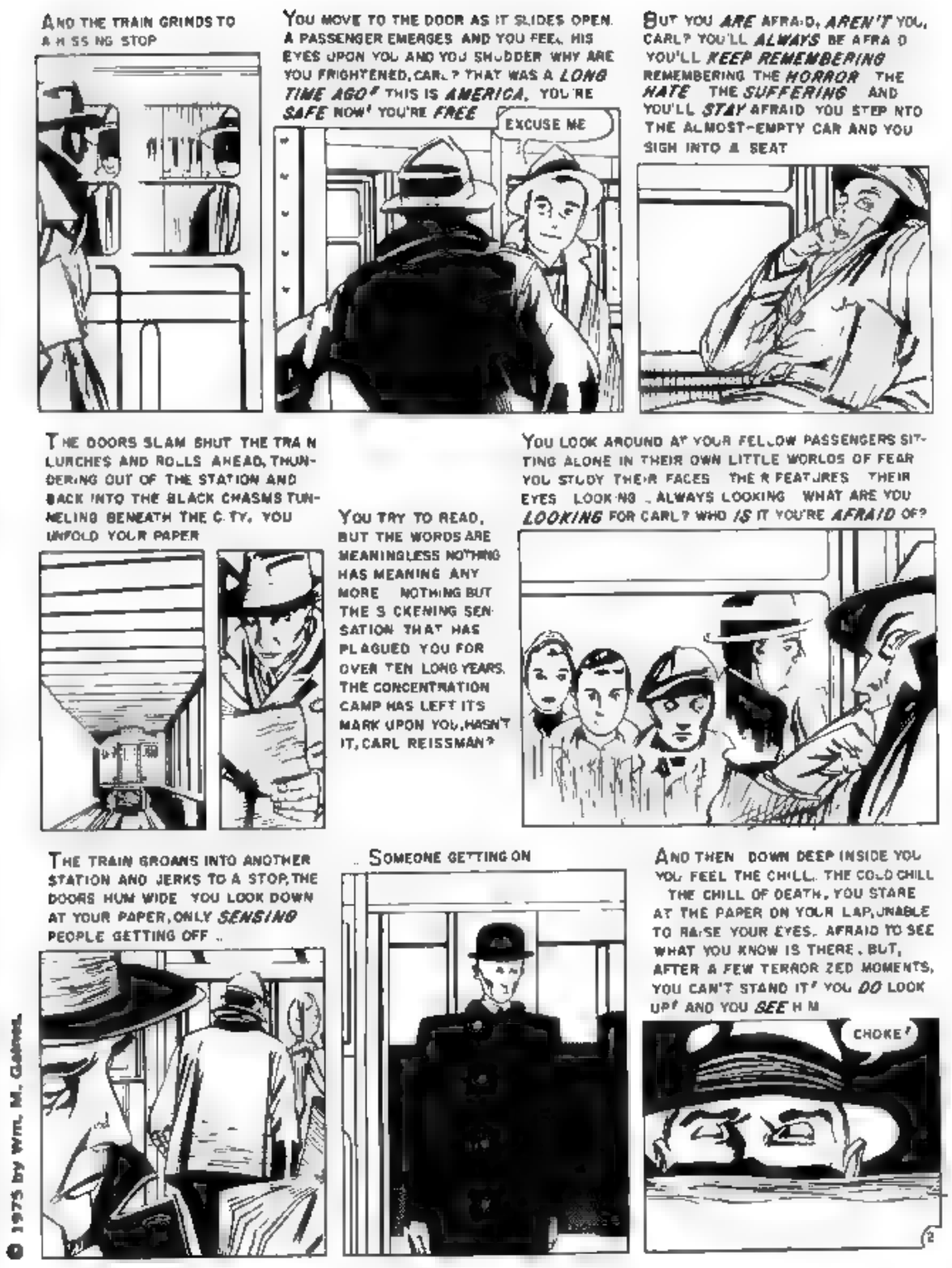
It should be noted that in these three panels there is the compositional unity of Reissman on the left of panel 1 facing right, in the center of panel 2 facing away from us, and on the right of panel 3 facing left, which suggests the character's movement through the scene.

By placing the images of panels 4 and 5 under a single block of text the artist is able to show two viewpoints simultaneously; Reissman in panel 5 sits reading inside the thundering train of panel 4. The slightly askew ceiling girders suggest the "lurches" mentioned in the text.

The un-Krigstein-like mass of text that follows causes a visually unattractive hole in the center of the page, and is probably the result of the space limitations that were given the artist. Even so, the block of text is a visual reference to the columns of type in Reissman's newspaper in the previous panel. Even the words themselves—"meaningless . . . nothing has meaning . . . nothing . . ."—could be thought of as

1. Krigstein's comment: *I'm glad you've mentioned sound, because to me the whole first section has a strong sound effect. I was very conscious of the sound of that train coming in. Creating a rhythm, both within the picture and the rhythm relating one picture to another, was an extremely important element in designing pictures for this specific story.*

2. Krigstein's comment: *I do remember the sensation of inspiration in panel 5—the crucial transitional unit in a series of three. I didn't think of the design as flattening out (which it does do), but felt the* picture *rising up to the viewer from the deep interior in an accumulating rush, and resolved in panel three. But your analysis is also quite correct.*


AND THE TRAIN GRINDS TO A HISSING STOP
YOU MOVE TO THE DOOR AS IT SLIDES OPEN. A PASSENGER EMERGES AND YOU FEEL HIS EYES UPON YOU AND YOU SHUDDER WHY ARE YOU FRIGHTENED, CARL? THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO! THIS IS AMERICA. YOU'RE SAFE NOW! YOU'RE FREE
EXCUSE ME
BUT YOU ARE AFRAID, AREN'T YOU, CARL? YOU'LL ALWAYS BE AFRAID YOU'LL KEEP REMEMBERING REMEMBERING THE HORROR THE HATE THE SUFFERING AND YOU'LL STAY AFRAID YOU STEP INTO THE ALMOST-EMPTY CAR AND YOU SIGH INTO A SEAT
THE DOORS SLAM SHUT THE TRAIN LURCHES AND ROLLS AHEAD, THUNDERING OUT OF THE STATION AND BACK INTO THE BLACK CHASMS TUNNELING BENEATH THE CITY. YOU UNFOLD YOUR PAPER
YOU LOOK AROUND AT YOUR FELLOW PASSENGERS SITTING ALONE IN THEIR OWN LITTLE WORLDS OF FEAR YOU STUDY THEIR FACES THEIR FEATURES THEIR EYES LOOKING . . ALWAYS LOOKING WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR CARL? WHO IS IT YOU'RE AFRAID OF?
YOU TRY TO READ, BUT THE WORDS ARE MEANINGLESS NOTHING HAS MEANING ANY MORE NOTHING BUT THE SICKENING SENSATION THAT HAS PLAGUED YOU FOR OVER TEN LONG YEARS. THE CONCENTRATION CAMP HAS LEFT ITS MARK UPON YOU, HASN'T IT, CARL REISSMAN?
THE TRAIN GROANS INTO ANOTHER STATION AND JERKS TO A STOP, THE DOORS HUM WIDE YOU LOOK DOWN AT YOUR PAPER, ONLY SENSING PEOPLE GETTING OFF . .
. . SOMEONE GETTING ON
AND THEN DOWN DEEP INSIDE YOU YOU FEEL THE CHILL. THE COLD CHILL THE CHILL OF DEATH. YOU STARE AT THE PAPER ON YOUR LAP, UNABLE TO RAISE YOUR EYES. AFRAID TO SEE WHAT YOU KNOW IS THERE. BUT, AFTER A FEW TERROR ZED MOMENTS, YOU CAN'T STAND IT! YOU DO LOOK UP! AND YOU SEE HIM
CHOKE!
2
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reflecting what Reissman actually sees as well as being a comment on his thoughts. The most is made of a compromised situation.[3]

The text for panel 7 describes Reissman studying the faces of his fellow passengers, something a man living in fear would be unlikely to do. Krigstein solves this inconsistency in characterization by showing Reissman surreptitiously looking at their *reflections* from behind his upturned collar. Reissman is walled in by faces, in reflection to his right, in life to his left, trapped as he was by the panel border in panel 3.

The first panel in the last tier, panel 8, is the symmetrical opposite of the previous panel. Due to the switch in viewpoint, we now see the people whose reflections were previously in the window; the man in the cap, the woman in the turban.

From panel 8 to panel 9 there is a switch from an objective to a subjective viewpoint, one of the two clearly subjective panels in the story. One knows that the man getting on is important because he is seen through Reissman's eyes. The single line of text similarly isolates the event.

There are other shocks to the eye which establish the importance of panel 9. There is an element of depth between the close view of Reissman and the retreating passengers in the background in panel 8 that sharply contrasts with the single plane of panel 9. This change is reinforced by the contrast of the delineation of roundness of the exiting passenger's coat with the solid flat black of the new passenger. Finally there is the very important contrast between the clutter and sketchiness of panel 8 to the simple austerity of panel 9.

The man who enters is dressed in black, with a face like a skull; the symbol of death. He is framed in a Mondrian-like abstraction of Perfect Order, the certitude of retribution that is soon to fall upon Reissman.

Reissman's reaction to the new passenger, panel 10, is emphasized with the story's first and practically only close-up. His terror-laden eyes are further claustrophobically squeezed between his hat and the newspaper. The exaggerated whites of his eyes, framed with black, heighten the drama and contrast with the narrow slits Reissman had previously used to survey the other passengers.

At this very dramatic moment, Krigstein draws back. The caption of panel 1 on page 3 describes Reissman's mouth twitching, his hands opening and closing, wet with perspiration, yet we are shown only his back unobtrusively placed in the corner of a panoramic longshot. This is not to be the moment of confrontation. Instead, Krigstein establishes the antagonists in their locale, squared off on the opposite sides of a nearly empty subway car, separated by a lone uninvolved passenger who, bored or asleep, is unaware of their private drama. Reissman and the Man are inked in heavy blacks, unlike the antiseptically rendered subway car around them. Krigstein's subway is barren, cold, sterile, not the familiar well-worn garbage-strewn vehicle that we feel comfortable in.[4]

After thus setting the stage, the story embarks on a three page flashback, with panel 2 serving as the connecting device.

Whereas the first section of "Master Race" achieves its suspense through a use of the physical qualities of the art (spatial relationships, the opposition of black and white, flatness and depth, etc.), the second section uses clear-cut visual symbols and metaphors to make unmistakable political and moral statements. In addition, the flashback section is generally arranged like a series of photographs; less importance is placed on continuity. Each panel provides a separate piece of historical information.

Perhaps it is a flaw of the twist-ending plot that this section does not deal directly with the characters. Krigstein has seized upon this impersonality to drive home the universal nature of the conflicts in the story.

It is in this section that Krigstein's cold aloof rendering is most apparent. Here is where long shots are most often used. The horrors described are consistently underplayed in the pictures. This distancing only serves to accentuate and heighten the horror of the events that transpired during the Nazi reign.

In the first panel of the flashback, panel 3 on page 3, Krigstein uses a long shot which emphasizes the crowd's roar echoing the roar of the train, rather than, as the text does, tying Hitler's voice to the screech of the wheels. The long shot of the gigantic rally is a much better image to begin the flashback with than Hitler's face as described in the text. It forcefully establishes the whole sweep of a period of history. Using the blocks of vast crowds and the angular rim of the podium, Krigstein captures the motif of power and

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3. Krigstein's comment: *Maybe both things are true. If I had had all the space that I wanted, it would not have been just text. But because of the limitations of space, I made what for me was a very important decision; to have a pictureless panel, which was totally contrary to my whole feeling about pictures. And that was the one that I sacrificed because I could get away with it in a good formal way. It still remained part of the total form. But the decision was definitely the result of soul searching.*

4. Krigstein's comment: *I wanted the story to appear in a total, clear light. And the more clear and orderly the story, the more "objectively" done, the more the emotional content of it would have weight. I thought the emotional intensity of the story was best served by total clarity. In the story, my subway* cannot *be well worn; the subway is a great, a tremendous engine.*

HE SITS STIFFLY, READING HIS PAPER, NOT LOOKING AT YOU, NOT NOTICING YOU. BUT YOU'VE SEEN HIM, CARL! YOU'VE SEEN HIS FACE .. THE ONE YOU KNEW SOMEDAY YOU'D SEE AGAIN ...THE FACE YOU'VE BEEN AFRAID TO SEE FOR TEN LONG YEARS YOUR MOUTH TWITCHES. YOUR HANDS OPEN AND CLOSE, WET WITH PERSPIRATION ..
NO! NO! HE CAN'T HURT ME NOW! HE CAN'T! HE WOULDN'T!
THE TRAIN SCREAMS AROUND A CURVE IN ITS SUBTERRANIAN ROUTE ...AND THE SCREAM IS SHRILL AND SHARP. SETTING YOUR TEETH ON EDGE... REACHING BACK INTO THE PAST
..TO ANOTHER SHRILL SCREAM... THE SCREAM OF A LITTLE MAN WITH WILD EYES AND BLACK HAIR AND A SMALL BLACK MOUSTACHE ..
SIEG HEIL ..SIEG HEIL.. SIEG HEIL!
REMEMBER, CARL? REMEMBER THE LITTLE MAN IN THE UNIFORM WHO STOOD FIRST BEFORE SMALL GROUPS.. THEN BEFORE CROWDS, ..AND FINALLY BEFORE MULTITUDES..AND SCREAMED AND SCREAMED THEM INTO AN HYSTERICAL MISSION OF WORLD CONQUEST. YOU WERE THERE...IN ONE OF THOSE CROWDS. REMEMBER?
SIEG HEIL!
AND WHEN THE LITTLE MAN HAD STOPPED SCREAMING AND THE CROWD HAD DISPERSED, REMEMBER THE SICKENING FEELING YOU HAD... THE REVULSION AND NAUSEA YOU FELT AS YOU TRUDGED HOME? ..
ARBEIT MACHT DAS LEBEN SUSS
THERE WERE OTHERS LIKE YOU, CARL
...OTHERS WHO WERE SICK AND REVOLTED AND NAUSEATED AT THE SCREAMING PROPOSALS OF THIS LITTLE MAN. BUT THEY COULDN'T STOP THE TIDE, COULD THEY, CARL? THEY COULDN'T STEM THE FLOW OF HATE THAT POURED THROUGH THE STREETS WITH CLUBS AND GUNS AND THE ECHOES OF THE LITTLE MAN'S SCREAMS URGING IT ON...
© 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines.
NO ONE COULD STOP THE BOOKS FROM BEING BURNED.
KULTUR
OR THE SHOP WINDOWS FROM BEING SMASHED AND THEIR CONTENTS RANSACKED.
..OR THE SANCTITY OF HOMES FROM BEING VIOLATED. . .
IT WAS A MADNESS... A WAVE THAT SWEPT THROUGH YOUR HOMELAND LIKE A PLAGUE .. A TIDAL WAVE OF FRENZIED HATE-FEARS AND BLOOD-LETTING AND EXPLODING VIOLENCE. . . A WILD UNCONTROLLED WAVE THAT SWEPT YOU AND YOUR KIND ALONG WITH IT
HEIL HITLER!
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, CARL? WHEN WERE YOU CAUGHT UP IN THIS TIDE? WHEN DID YOU FIRST SEE BELSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP AND THE HUMAN MISERY THAT SOBBED WITHIN ITS BARBED WIRE WALLS?
DO YOU REMEMBER, CARL? DO YOU REMEMBER THE AWFUL SMELL OF THE GAS CHAMBERS THAT HOURLY ANNIHILATED HUNDREDS AND HUNDREDS OF YOUR COUNTRYMEN?
DO YOU REMEMBER THE STINKING ODOR OF HUMAN FLESH BURNING IN THE OVENS MEN'S WOMEN'S CHILDREN'S PEOPLE YOU ONCE KNEW AND TALKED TO AND DRANK BEER WITH?
■ 1975 by ■m. M. Gaines.

massiveness used in the Nazi rallies. The "Sieg Heil" is not enclosed in a standard balloon, but floats over the crowd as a generalized roar.

In panel 4 Krigstein reverses the process, showing a close-up of glassy-eyed faces when the text speaks of "multitudes." He has thus added an element not present in the text, rather than merely illustrating it.

In panel 5, the figures, dwarfed by the towering fascist icons, move stiffly as though hypnotized. The blowing paper proclaims "Work makes life sweet," a phrase which was inscribed over the entrance of Auschwitz and other concentration camps.

Panel 6, one of the panels created by Krigstein's expansion of the story, isolates Reissman from the rest of the crowd. Once again, Reissman is in shadow. Panel 7 compositionally echoes panel 5; both show a group of advancing figures seen from a low angle. The civilians have been transformed into Hitler's Gestapo. When separated by the lone figure of Reissman, the three panels together also hint at Reissman's own transition from a member of the crowd to a Nazi.[5]

The three panels at the top of page 4 form a remarkable triptych encapsuling the universality of the Nazis' brutalizing effect on German life; not only Jews were affected. Because the representation is meant to be universal, the symbols are clear. Labels are applied almost in the manner of a political cartoon. The simian faces of the brownshirts are so exaggerated as to be caricature. Across the top, serving almost as titles for each picture, are the words "Kultur," "Jude," and a crucifix, the three great life-modes that were present in Germany, with Judaism, the one which suffered most, in the center.

Below these titles are dreamlike composite scenes showing violence to various social classes; the intellectual, the shopkeeper (middle class) and the worker. The titles on the books are labels rather than realistic representations; the star of David is certainly a symbol, and the falling man's overall straps are another. That this last symbol was important to Krigstein is demonstrated by the fact that he still recalled and was annoyed that the colorist had mistakenly colored the straps the same as the shirt, eight years after he had last seen the story in color.

Note that panel 2 shows a brownshirt about to strike. Although panel 3 is a different scene, the action is carried through and the blow has been struck. In panel 3, the man's outstretched arms parallel, compositionally and in theme, the crucifix on the wall. The floor tiles are slightly angled, subtly emphasizing the imbalance of the falling man. Note other details, such as the drops of blood from the word "Kultur" in panel 1 and the observer who smiles without compassion in panel 2.

In panel 4 Krigstein again juxtaposes image with text. While the text speaks of a "wild uncontrolled wave" of hate, the picture shows the other side of the coin, everything coldly efficient and orderly, with strict horizontal columns of anonymous soldiers and overpowering vertical pillars of Nazi

5. Krigstein's comment: *You've given this a psychological implication that I'm not aware of. I did not think of him, or these other people, at that time, transformed into brownshirts. But it's open enough; it certainly could be that, and I may have been confronted with that possibility when I drew it. But frequently when I have been confronted with the possibility of interpretation I don't go any further than that single confrontation, and whatever happens afterwards, happens.*

DO YOU REMEMBER THE UNMERCIFUL TORTURES...THE SCREAMS IN THE NIGHT THE PITIFUL WAILING OF THE DOOMED? DO YOU REMEMBER THE MAD EXPERIMENTS WITH HUMAN GUINEA PIGS...THE WANTON WASTE OF HUMAN LIFE?
THE BULBS THAT BURNED IN LAMPS ON DESKS IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMP OFFICES BLOWING THROUGH THEIR HUMAN SKIN-SHADES?..
LOOK, CARL! LOOK AT THE FACE OF THIS MAN SITTING ACROSS FROM YOU IN THIS NOW DESERTED SUBWAY CAR! LOOK.. AND REMEMBER! REMEMBER THE GUARDS THAT GLEEFULLY CARRIED OUT THE SADISTIC ORDERS OF THE MASTER RACE.. WHIPPING.. KICKING ... BEATING!. THE GUARDS THAT EAGERLY DRAGGED THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN TO THE WAITING, SMOKING OVENS!..
REMEMBER THE GUARDS THAT PUSHED AND SHOVED...HEAPING THE HELPLESS CAMP INMATES INTO THE FRESH DUG MASS GRAVES.
..LAUGHING WILDLY AS THEY BURIED THEIR VICTIMS ALIVE.. SHOVELING THE DIRT DOWN UPON THEM; MUFFLING THEIR PATHETIC SCREAMS ..MUFFLING THEIR PATHETIC LIVES!.
6
© 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines.
LOOK AT THIS MAN AND REMEMBER, CARL! REMEMBER HIS FACE... THE LOOK THAT CAME INTO HIS EYES WHEN THE NEWS CAME THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE ONLY A FEW KILOMETERS AWAY! IT WAS OVER FOR YOU, THEN, CARL! THE KILLING AND MAIMING AND TORTURING WAS SUDDENLY OVER FOR YOU!
AND THEN YOU WERE FREE... RUNNING PELL-MELL ACROSS EUROPE, HIDING YOUR CLOTHES, LOSING YOURSELF IN AMONG THE STREAMS OF REFUGEES THAT CHOKED THE ROADS AND HIGHWAYS BEFORE THE ADVANCING ALLIED ARMIES...
AND YET IT WASN'T OVER, BECAUSE HE LOOKED AT YOU AND SWORE.
SOMEDAY, I'LL GET YOU, REISSMAN! I'LL GET YOU.. IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO!
AND YET YOU WEREN'T FREE, CARL! EVEN THOUGH YOU SOMEHOW GOT TO AMERICA, YOU NEVER FORGOT! YOU NEVER FORGOT HIS PROMISE! SO YOU CARRIED THE FEAR WITH YOU FOR TEN YEARS AND NOW IT'S CAUGHT UP WITH YOU! HE'S THERE.. SITTING OPPOSITE YOU.. FEELING YOUR FRIGHTENED STARING EYES UPON HIM
AND NOW HE'S LOOKING AT YOU HE'S LOOKING AT YOUR HAIR.. AT YOUR LIPS.. YOUR NOSE.. DEEP INTO YOUR FRIGHTENED EYES, AND A SPARK OF FAR-AWAY, LONG-AGO RECOGNITION IGNITES HIS FACE..
YOU!
CHOKE..
HE RISES SLOWLY, HIS MOUTH SET IN A GRIM TAUT LINE HIS EYES CLOUD WITH HATE, HIS FISTS CLENCH
REISSMAN!
IT'S YOU!
NO! NO! GOTT IN HIMMEL!
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architecture. The text of the whole flashback section does not describe the extreme regimentation inherent in fascism, an element one must be aware of to understand its nature. Krigstein has added the element here. In fascism the hate and the regimentation are bonded; this panel and its caption successfully portray the bond.

In contrast to the faceless automatons in panel 4, each prisoner depicted in panel 5 has an individual, albeit similar expression, each a different manifestation of suffering. The prisoners seem calm, even tranquil. A part of this picture's power is derived from its inspiration, a historical photograph of camp inmates.

Panel 6 is a view from inside a guard tower, a view that Reissman must have seen many times—another clue that Reissman was one of the oppressors, not a victim. The road in this silent sombre picture suggests a swastika. Again, the scene is orderly, cold flat walls hiding the horror described in the text.

The sombre tones are further emphasized in another view of the gas chambers in panel 7. Here the blacks and greys are so strong as to preclude any color. The ledge of the wall sharply divides the panel, and below it, cleanly rendered Germans go about their business, trying to avoid the stench. The tree reaches into the top half of the panel; its leaves are blackened.

In panel 1, page 5, Krigstein again allows the horror to be expressed in the text, depicting ordinary looking doctors performing what could be, from the evidence of the picture alone, a beneficial operation. When juxtaposed with the text, the *lack* of horror in the picture is probably more terrifying than a graphic representation of tortures could ever be. Part of the incomprehensible horror of the camps was, in fact, that many who staffed them treated their grisly tasks as every day jobs.

In panel 2 the innocent looking lamp dominates the scene. Instead of the office locale the text describes, Krigstein shows us an image of debauched Nazis at their leisure, perhaps to stronger contrast the horrors of the camps. The poses are vaguely reminiscent of George Grosz.[6]

The montage of panel 3 returns us briefly to the present, tying the sweep of history to the drama of the subway. The train's wheels and the pulsating repetition of the Man's face again powerfully call forth the roar of the subway. But the images from Reissman's past literally burn through to the forefront, and the flashback continues.

Panels 4 and 5 appear to depict realistic scenes, yet the extraordinary rendering exudes a dreamlike quality. The bodies appear to float in slow motion down to their common grave. The absence of background and of any delineation of the grave contribute to the unreal effect. Colorist Marie Severin seems to have realized this; she used unrealistic colors, a single solid tone for the figures and another for the backgrounds. Again, note the careful details, such as the baby falling into the pit, and the guard casually lighting a cigarette while standing near the victims' pile of shoes.

Panel 1 on page 6 shows in a visual way what the text states, that the war is over. Both Germany's civilian and military destruction are pictured. In a very effective composition, Krigstein contrasts the destroyed German tank in

6. Krigstein's comment: *The reference to George Grosz would not apply. He is a great artist, but the content of bitter satire is what separates his work from my approach in this story.*

THE TRAIN GRINDS TO A STOP. THE DOORS SLIDE OPEN. HE'S COMING TOWARD YOU, CARL! RUN! THIS IS YOUR CHANCE! RUN!...
RUN .. AS YOU RAN FROM BELSEN, CARL! RUN... AS YOU RAN ACROSS EUROPE, FLEEING THE LIBERATING ALLIED ARMIES! RUN, NOW, CARL... AS YOU REFUSED TO RUN WHEN THAT MAD WAVE SWEPT OVER GERMANY...SWEEPING YOU ALONG IN ITS BLOODY WAKE!
I SWORE..
I SWORE I'D GET YOU, REISSMAN!
NO!
HAVE PITY!
RUN DOWN THE LONG, EMPTY, DESERTED STATION PLATFORM, CARL! RUN FROM THIS PERSONIFICATION OF THE MILLIONS OF YOUR COUNTRYMEN WHO COULDN'T RIDE THE TIDE YOU CHOSE TO RIDE.. WHO WERE CAUGHT IN ITS UNDERTOW...
IT'S NO USE, REISSMAN!
PLEASE.
WHO WERE PERSECUTED AND JAILED AND BURNED IN OVENS AND GASSED AND BURIED ALIVE IN MASS GRAVES
RUN FROM THIS SURVIVOR OF A HUMAN HELL ON EARTH.. THIS SURVIVOR OF A GERMAN CONCENTRATION CAMP .. BELSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP
THE CAMP THAT YOU COMMANDED!

the foreground with the approaching Russian ones. The text indicates that the Man is in the scene, but Krigstein shows only a landscape to emphasize the close-up in the next panel.

Although the story is told in the second person (a narrative device rare outside of EC), Krigstein all but completely avoids the use of subjective viewpoints, probably because their excessive use becomes a gimmick. Even Krigstein's own experiment with the subjective viewpoint in "You, Murderer" (obviously inspired by another EC second person script), while excellent, definitely has an element of gimmickry that cannot compete with the classic style of "Master Race."

Panel 2 is the second of two clearly subjective panels in the story, and the Man's vengeful stare is directed squarely, not only at Reissman, but at the reader as well. The reader is no longer a detached observer as he has been throughout the flashback; Reissman's guilt is now his guilt.

The flashback, which in 18 or 20 images has presented a remarkably diverse mosaic of the Nazi era, ends with panel 3. The strange perspective in this panel causes the figures lying at the side of the road to look as if they are already underground and buried. Note that the dead are soldiers and the living are civilians. A dog traverses the line dividing the living from the dead—perhaps Cerberus, the hound of Hell.

We are brought back to the present, and Krigstein begins his famous adventure into subjective time. Nearly half the total number of panels in the story are devoted to the next few moments of action, moments which seem like an eternity for Reissman. These moments are the core of the story—in some ways they *are* the story, for until now nothing has occurred other than two people being seated across from each other in a subway. To merely show Reissman's death in one panel, as the original script may have done, would not serve the dramatic purpose of the story.

The third section returns to a strong sense of continuity from panel to panel. But whereas the first section progresses at a regulated rhythm, the third section is much more irregular, like the terrified gasps of a running man. The rhythm of the continuity speeds up or slows down, according to the needs of the narrative. Time becomes elastic.

In the first section, although each panel is the integral part of a strong continuity, each panel individually also contains a great deal of information, given both in the detail and in the technique of presentation. This was natural and necessary because of the expositional nature of the opening sequence.

In the third section the panels are much more closely interrelated to one another, with generally less detail within the panel. The exposition is over and what is important now is Krigstein's creation of different rhythms which draw the reader into the violent climax. Thus the amount of information in each panel is crucial; it must be enough so that the full drama of the sequence is grasped, while at the same time it must not be in such profusion that the rhythm of the panels is lost.

In the last five panels of page 6, there is a progressive expansion of the height of the panel, drawing the reader into the scene, coupled with a progressive contraction of panel width, speeding up the rhythm of these short takes. The change to a diagonal background from panels 5 to 6 also serves to quicken the rhythm.

Panels 4 and 5 work as a couplet. In panel 4 Reissman is a bundle of nerves, hiding behind his paper, his shoulders hunched up, his cheek-bone high and tight on his face. In the next panel a number of subtle changes take place. Reissman finally lets out the tension which has been within him since the beginning of the story. His paper, shoulders and jawbone all drop down.

In the next two panels, 6 and 7, the viewpoint has been reversed, but the symmetrical balance between the two characters has been maintained. The previous viewpoint was from over the Man's right shoulder; now it is over Reissman's left shoulder.

The changes between panel 6 and panel 7 are also very significant. The major development is the Man's transformation from an undefined lump to an upright angry faced individual, from victim to attacker. There are other less obvious but equally important changes. Reissman's hat has become lower in the panel, moving closer to his collar; he has shrunk back in addition to throwing up his arm in a gesture of defense.

As were panels 6 and 7 on page 6, the first three panels on page 7 are unified by a single block of text into an analysis, in staccato flashes, of a brief moment. Note, however, that each of the three panels is shown from a slightly different viewpoint.

Once again, it is the changes that occur between the panels that are so interesting. In panel 1, the Man is relatively calm. In panel 2, he has tensed up; his arm is thrown out with a half fist. The space between his coat and his hat has shortened; he is crouching, ready to pounce. But the door has slid open between panels 2 and 3, allowing Reissman to flee. The tension is deflated. Within the larger chase, Krigstein is creating sub-units of events.

Note the odd cropping of the figures in these and the following panels, which conveys a sense of claustrophobia and confusion.

Krigstein's ability to show emotion through the way the characters posture their bodies, of importance throughout the story, is particularly noticeable in this section. In panel 4 he incisively captures the very specific and real gesture of a man squeezing purposefully through a closing subway door. In

panel 5 the Man appears to be *stalking* Reissman as much as chasing him. Reissman's running is feverishly agitated, wild. In panel 6 he is on the right, in panel 7 on the left, giving the swaying sensation of uncontrolled running. The delineation of his shapeless wobbly pantlegs contributes to the effect.

The panoramic view of the deserted station in panel 8 marks the change from the startled beginnings of interaction between the antagonists to the long chase. Not unlike panel 1 on page 3, this sudden distancing at a dramatic moment, this emphasis, with a horizontal long shot, of an antiseptic and unfeeling locale, shifts the reader's perspective of the drama from the personal to the universal. The Man's arms are raised like an avenging angel. The endless pillars and ceiling ridges radiate intensity in an overpowering manner not unlike Munch's painting "The Scream."[7] Indeed, it is this very architectural intensity that recalls the immutability of Fate.

Jack Davis chose the same scene for the cover and it is interesting to compare the two. Davis has created a nice composition in which all the lines focus one's attention on the little man in black; it is a textbook example of the illustrator's art. But Krigstein's panel is infinitely more complex and conveys the ineffable quality of real art.

The close-up of the foot in panel 9 provides balance for the similar close-up at the top right of the page. Reissman has regained his strength; his pants legs are now taut.

Page 7 has been filled with optical shocks: unusual cropping of figures; cuts from close shots to long shots; from small vertical panels to large horizontal panels. Another occurs between panels 9 and 10; movement in depth is juxtaposed with flat, horizontal movement. Time freezes, and one becomes aware of the not quite real nature of the entire situation. The use of scale, the tiny running figures dwarfed by the images of horror, is as important in achieving the effect of nightmare as is the combining of past and present in the same panel.

The last panel of the page begins the denouement. It is now explicit that Reissman was not a prisoner but a commandant, the cause of his present guilt and fear. Reissman is viewed from below, a natural way to depict power; it is also the same angle with which he entered the story. Expressionistic scribbles at the bottom of the panel provide a metaphor for the irrational chaos over which he reigned.

The final page of the story features Krigstein's most famous use of the breakdown technique, the spectacular depiction of Reissman's fall from the subway platform. The very brilliance of this sequence seems to have overshadowed Krigstein's masterful handling of the rest of the story, just as his breakdown technique has overshadowed his other contributions to the comic form.

In panel 1 on page 8, the Man has already stopped running; he knows that Reissman's moment of death is upon him. Reissman desperately tries to keep himself balanced, but one can see from the delineation of the folds of his trousers that he has no footing.

With panel 2 there is a dramatic shift of angle which serves to emphasize both the space into which Reissman will soon fall and the onrushing train which will crush him.

Panels 3 to 6 show four separate images of the actual moment of fall. Strangely, this most famous example of the breakdown technique is uncharacteristic in that each panel shows exactly the same viewpoint. Perhaps the moment depicted is so brief that Krigstein felt it constituted a single visual unit, the four successive heads forming one curve of descent. Note how Reissman's expression changes from surprise to horror and then determination, and his body posture shifts from formless falling, to tense straining to regain his balance, to a final hopeless grab for the platform.

WHAT HAPPENED?
I DON'T KNOW! HE GOT OUT AHEAD OF ME AND BEGAN TO RUN!
HE RAN UP THE PLATFORM AND THEN JUMPED UNDER THE WHEELS OF THE TRAIN COMING IN THE OTHER WAY
EVER SEE HIM BEFORE?
NO! HE
HE WAS A PERFECT STRANGER
THE END
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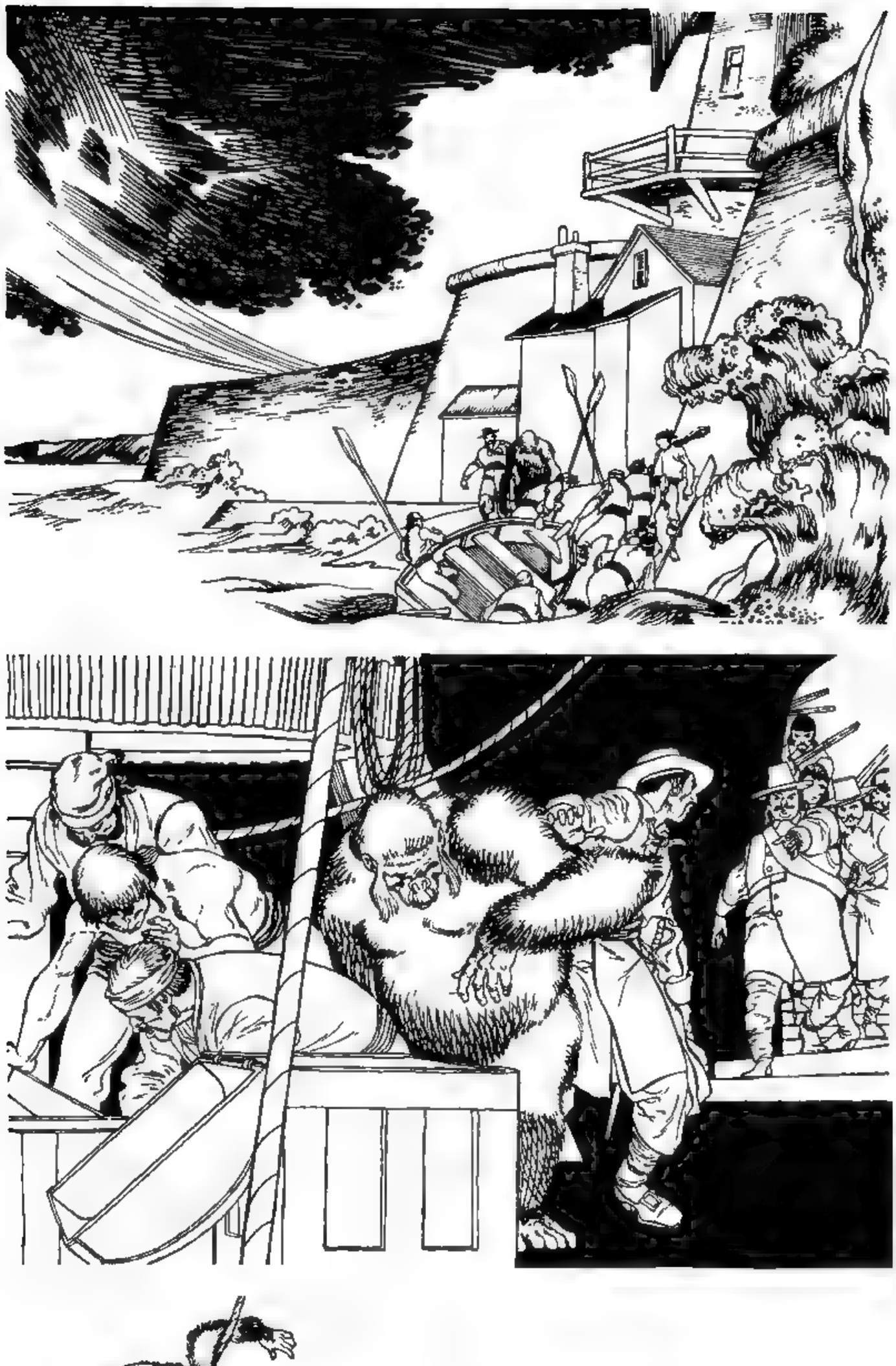
The sequence of the next four panels (7 to 10) alternates shots looking along the tracks at the oncoming train with shots at right angles to the tracks showing Reissman's fall into the path of the train. This could be considered cross-cutting, but could just as logically be showing simultaneous occurrences. A more standard method would be to show the train and Reissman's fall in one single shot, but Krigstein has broken the scene down into component images. This technique continues the rhythm of the panels that has been built up, avoids a panel that would be too full of data for a climax, and expands the final moment before Reissman's death.

Finally, at the point of impact, Krigstein cuts away from the tracks to the platform (panel 11). The nightmare is over. The panel is square; there is no longer the activity of the slender panels. The depiction of the rushing train reflects back to the nearly identical panel on page 1. There is a return to the every day reality that existed before the drama began.

Krigstein's grasp of the human moment is again evident in his depiction of the passengers flooding from the car in panel 12. The arm of a hurried commuter who doesn't wish to be involved is seen in the lower left. A woman cranes her head to get a better view.

The Man turns and fades into the darkness from whence he came. The statement that Reissman was "a perfect stranger" adds a note of ambiguity. The man is probably lying; indeed, he was seen rushing toward Reissman. But possibly the earlier scenes were Reissman's subjective understanding of altogether different objective events. ■■

7. Krigstein's comment: *I'm fascinated that you should recall Munch in this context, because he's really one of my favorite artists. I didn't think of the analogy between that particular painting and this panel though.*



A KRIGSTEIN BIBLIOGRAPHY

COMICS

This listing of Krigstein's comic book work is as complete as we could make it, but there are certainly many omissions. Particularly his work at Fawcett is not well represented. Any additions by readers will be appreciated. Generally, stories about which there is some doubt have not been included on the list. The most interesting of these doubtful items is a pre-war story, "Subbie," in *Kid Komics* #2 (Summer 1943). Krigstein thinks he may have done a story for Timely at that time, but we have been unable to locate a copy so he can check the art. Readers should take note that some comics which the Overstreet *Guide* lists as having Krigstein art do not in fact have any.

The quality of Krigstein's comic stories varies widely. As a whole, the EC stories are undoubtedly his finest work, and the Ziff-Davis generally the worst. Really superior stories can be found at any company during any time period, but Krigstein is the first to say that some were done very fast and are very uninteresting.

Issue No.	Date	No. of Pages	Story title; Remarks
Aces High (EC)			
1	Mar-Apr 55	6	The Mascot
2	May-Jun 55	6	Revenge
3	Jul-Aug 55	6	The Spy
4	Sep-Oct 55	6	The Good Luck Piece
5	Nov-Dec 55	6	Spads Were Trump
Adventures into Terror (Atlas)			
9	Apr 52	5	Second Floor Rear
10	Jun 52	4	The Old Hag
12	Oct 52	5	Horror in the Graveyard
Adventures into Weird Worlds (Atlas)			
10	Sep 52	5	The Killers
Airboy Comics (Hillman)			
v5n2	Jan 49	6	Pickett's Charge at the Battle of Gettysburg (pencilling only)
v8n4	May 51	7	Captain Splint's Hairy Helper
All-American Men of War (DC)			
128	Oct-Nov 52	6	Topkick
2	D 52 - J 53	5 2/3	Battle Ghost
3	Feb-Mar 53	3 2/3	60-Second Veteran
5	Jun-Jul 53	5 2/3	Playoff on Slaughter Hill
All Sports Comics (Hillman)			
2	D 48 - J 49	5	The Fly (inked by Belfi)
All True Crime (Atlas)			
42	Jan 51	7	The Highwayman
49	Mar 52	6	King of the Con Men
Amazing Adventures (Ziff-Davis)			
6	Fall 52	8	Space Pirates on Xarpot
Amazing Detective Cases (Atlas)			
12	May 52	4	The Eerie Escape
Astonishing (Atlas)			
13	May 52	4	Ghoul's Gold
14	Jun 52	5	Under Glass
16	Aug 52	6	The Miser
19	Nov 52	5	Roll Call
45	Jan 56	5	The Vagrant
47	Mar 56	5	The Hypnotist (61 panels)
Battle (Atlas)			
21	Jul 53	5	Rough Riders
23	Nov 53	5	Last Bullet
Battle Action (Atlas)			
8	Jan 53	5	Sgt. Dugan's Squad
Battleground (Atlas)			
9	Jan 56	4	Garibaldi
Bible Tales for Young Folk (Atlas)			
2	Oct 53	5	Joseph and his Brethern
Bill Stern's Sports Book (Ziff-Davis)			
	Winter 52	7	A Tale of the Gringo Matadors
Caught (Atlas)			
5	Apr 57	4	Trapped in the Cave
Combat (Atlas)			
4	Sep 52	5	The Tank-Killers
Crime Detective Comics (Hillman)			
v1n5	Nov-Dec 48	8	Shakedown
v2n1	Mar-Apr 50	8	Cooked in Oil
v2n4	Sep-Oct 50	9	Now I Can Die Easy...
v2n7	Mar-Apr 51	6 2/3	The Huckster's Castle
Crime Exposed (Atlas)			
12	Apr 52	5	When Thieves Fall Out
13	May 52	6	The Hidden Man
Crime Illustrated (EC) Picto-Fiction			
1	Nov-Dec 55	12	Fall Guy for Murder (inked by Crandall)
Crime SuspenStories (EC)			
22	Apr-May 54	7	Monotony
24	Aug-Sep 54	7	More Blessed to Give...
25	Oct-Nov 54	6	Key Chain (63 panels)
27	Feb-Mar 55	6	Just Her Speed (61 panels)
Daring Adventures (St. John)			
6	May 54	7	Frog Men Against Belzar
6	May 54	3	The Terrorist
Dead Eye Western Comics (Hillman)			
v1n1	Nov-Dec 48	8	The Outlaw Wore Golden Earrings
v2n3	Apr-May 51	8	Blacksmith Belle Malone
v2n4	Jun-Jul 51	7	Black Silver Heart
Eerie Adventures (Ziff-Davis)			
?	?	1	cover
87th Precinct (Dell)			
1309	Apr-Jun 62	1	inside front cover illustration
1309	Apr-Jun 62	32	Blind Man's Bluff...
1309	Apr-Jun 62	2	back covers illustrations
Explorer Joe (Ziff-Davis)			
2	Oct-Nov 52	7	Explorer Joe—Eric the Red
Famous Stars (Ziff-Davis)			
5	Winter 51	3	Betty Grable
The Flash (DC)			
94	Apr 48	5	The Atom "Driveway for Crime" (inked by Reinman)
Frogman (Hillman)			
v1n5	Nov 52	3	The Sawdust Target
Girl Comics (Atlas)			
12	Jan 52	7	The Dark Hallway
The Haunt of Fear (EC)			
28	Nov-Dec 54	6	Numbskull
Impact (EC)			
1	Mar-Apr 55	8	Master Race
5	Nov-Dec 55	7	So Much More
Incredible Science Fiction (EC)			
30	Jul-Aug 55	5	Marbles
31	Sep-Oct 55	6	Fulfillment
32	Nov-Dec 55	6	The Ultimate Weapon
33	Jan-Feb 56	6	One Way Hero
Journey into Mystery (Atlas)			
34	May 56	4	Someone is Calling (52 panels)
46	May 57	4	The Desert Rat (73 panels)
Journey into Unknown Worlds (Atlas)			
11	Jun 52	5	Kiss of Death
12	Aug 52	5	Water, Water Everywhere
43	Mar 56	5	The Man Who Couldn't Be Reached (59 panels)
Justice Traps the Guilty (Prize)			
8	Jan-Feb 49	8	Eugene Vidocq...First Great Detective
10	Jun-Jul 49	9	Conning the Confidence Man
Love Diary (Toytown/Patches)			
?	?	8	Liar
?	Nov ?	7 2/3	Not My Decision to Make
Love Romances (Atlas)			
21	Mar 52	6	I Take this Man
24	Sep 52	4	Kate's Man
38	Apr 54	6	Another Girl's Man
Lovers (Atlas)			
37	Jan 52	6	Should I Marry a G.I.?
Love Tales (Atlas)			
52	Mar 52	6	The Truth about Trudy Lester
Mad (EC)			

12	Jun 54	7	From Eternity Back to Here
17	Nov 54	8	Bringing Back Father (Krigstein pencilled and inked 3 1/6 pages of this story. Other pages were by Bill Elder.)
24	Jul 55	1	Out of the Frying Pan and into the Soup (illustration)
26	Oct-Nov 55	5	Tense Tycoons and Lucky Bucks (illustrations)

Man (Atlas)

22	Jan 53	5	That's an Order

Marvel Tales (Atlas)

98	Dec 50	6	A Man Named Satan
106	Apr 52	5	The Dead of Night
107	Jun 52	4	Going My Way?
142	Jan 56	4	The Man Who Shrunk (41 panels)
157	Apr 57	4	Impossible Island
159	Aug 57	4	The Last Look (45 panels)

Men in Action (Atlas)

7	Oct 52	5	A Piece of Paper

Mystery Tales (Atlas)

2	May 52	4	He Went for a Train Ride
36	Dec 55	4	The Strange Sink
39	Mar 56	5	The House That Lived (58 panels)

Mystic (Atlas)

58	Apr 57	4	Dinosaur (54 panels)
59	May 57	4	Something Waits on the Mountain

Mystical Tales (Atlas)

6	Apr 57	4	He Hides in the Tower (52 panels)
8	Aug 57	4	The Lair of the Thunder Lizard

Navy Tales (Atlas)

3	May 57	4	Survival

Nightmare (St. John)

11	Feb 54	7	The Fangs of Death

Nyoka the Jungle Girl (Fawcett)

v3n17	Mar 48	5 2/3	Nyoka the Jungle Girl and the Perils of Peter Pippingworth. Part I–"Jungle Hide-Out"
v3n17	Mar 48	5	Part II–"Jungle Kidnapping"
v3n17	Mar 48	5 2/3	Part III–"Jungle Rescue"
v3n18	Apr 48	7	Nyoka the Jungle Girl/The Art of Murder. Part I–"A Brush with Death"
v3n18	Apr 48	5	Part II–"The Mad Masterpiece"

Our Army at War (DC)

4	Nov 52	5 2/3	Replacement
8	Mar 53	5 2/3	Toy Soldier
9	Apr 53	6	Eyes of the Artillery
10	May 53	6	Soldiers of the High Wire
11	Jun 53	6	Soldier's Luck
13	Aug 53	1	cover
13	Aug 53	6	Minutemen of Saratoga
14	Sep 53	6	Drummer of Waterloo

Piracy (EC)

3	Feb-Mar 55	6	Nazi U-Boat
4	Apr-May 55	7	Inheritance (71 panels)
5	Jun-Jul 55	1	cover
5	Jun-Jul 55	6	Salvage (62 panels)
6	Aug-Sep 55	1	cover
7	Oct-Nov 55	6	Up the River

Real Clue Crime Stories (Hillman)

v4n9	Nov 49	8	The Touch of the Spider
v5n6	Aug 50	8	The World's Strangest Shuffle
v5n9	Nov 50	8	Lilly-white Joe
v5n11	Jan 51	6	Back-room Academy
v6n6	Aug 51	8	Lester of the Bowery
v6n7	Sep 51	9	The Touch of Gentle George
v6n10	Dec 51	7	The Keeper of the Nest
v6n12	Feb 52	7	King of the Liars
v7n4	Jun 52	7	A Box of Baby Clothes
v7n12	Feb 53	6	Last Man in the World

Romantic Confessions (Hillman)

v2n3	Aug-Sep 51	7	My Own Private Dream...

Sensation (DC)

81	Sep 48	7	Wildcat–The Booby Trap Lottery (pencils only)
84	Dec 48	7	Wildcat–The Monkey's Circle

Shock SuspenStories (EC)

14	Apr-May 54	6	You, Murderer
18	D 54 - J 55	6	In the Bag (77 panels)

Space Adventures presents Rocky Jones, Space Ranger (Charlton)

16	May 55	6	Jealousy on Kano

Spacebusters (Ziff-Davis)

1	Spring 52	8	The Empress of Belzar
1	Spring 52	6	Charge of the Battle Women
1	Spring 52	7	Death Rite of the Dwarfs
1	Spring 52	4	Taru the Terrible

Space Patrol (Ziff-Davis)

1	Summer 52	7	The Lady of Diamonds
1	Summer 52	7	Outlaws of Vesta
1	Summer 52	7	Space Pirates
2	Oct-Nov 52	7	Robber Baron of Deimos
2	Oct-Nov 52	7	The Free State of Hecuba
2	Oct-Nov 52	7	Slave King of Pluto

Spellbound (Atlas)

6	Aug 52	6	The Man Who Couldn't Be Killed
17	Sep 53	5	Suppressed Desire

Sports Action (Atlas)

13	Jul 52	6	Strangle-hold

Squa Tront (Weist)

4	(c) 70	7	Slave Ship

Strange Adventures (DC)

32	May 53	6	The Atomic Invasion
33	Jun 53	6	The Snows of Mars

Strange Stories of Suspense (Atlas)

15	Jun 57	4	The Sinister Suit

Strange Tales (Atlas)

10	Sep 52	5	The Boy Who Was Afraid
15	Feb 53	5	Mary and the Witch
22	Sep 53	5	The Untouchable
42	Jan 56	4	Moon Man
45	Apr 56	4	The Man Who Went Back (52 panels)
59	Jul 57	4	When the World Went Mad
61	Feb 58	4	The Eyes That Never Close

Strange Tales of the Unusual (Atlas)

9	Apr 57	4	Mind Reader (46 panels)

Suspense (Atlas)

5	Nov 50	4	Even After Death
18	May 52	5	Stay Away
22	Sep 52	6	The Gabby Ghost

Tales from the Crypt (EC)

40	Feb-Mar 54	6	Prairie Schooner
42	Jun-Jul 54	6	The Bath
45	D 54 - J 55	6	Murder Dream

Tales of Justice (Atlas)

58	Feb 56	4	B'wana Martin
59	Apr 56	5	Doctors in the House (63 panels)

Target Comics (Novelty)

v8n6	Aug 47	5	Bull's-Eye Bill
?	?	5	Bull's-Eye Bill

3-D EC Classics (EC)

1	Spring 54	8	The Monster from the Fourth Dimension
3		7	Slave Ship (Issue not printed. See listing under *Squa Tront.*)

Thrilling Comics (Standard)

79	Jan 51	4	Kim Carson Pony Expressman– "Six Gun Thunder"

Treasure Comics (Prize)

5	Feb-Mar 46	6	The Treasure Keeper

Two-Fisted Tales (EC)

41	Feb-Mar 55	7	Mau Mau

Uncanny Tales (Atlas)

42	Apr 56	4	They Wait Below (75 panels)
54	Apr 57	4	The Warning
56	Sep 57	4	Out of This World (47 panels)

Valor (EC)

1	Mar-Apr 55	6	Strategy
2	May-Jun 55	6	Poetic Justice
3	Jul-Aug 55	5	The Pyramid
4	Sep-Oct 55	6	The Know-Nothing
5	Nov-Dec 55	6	Treasure from Xanadu

The Vault of Horror (EC)

36	Apr-May 54	6	Pipe Dream
38	Aug-Sep 54	6	The Catacombs
39	Oct-Nov 54	6	The Purge
40	D 54 - J 55	6	The Pit

Wanted Comics (Toytown/Patches)

21	Jul 49	7	The Mistake
24	Jan 50	6 2/3	One Way Street

War (Atlas)

22	Nov 53	5	Calling Card

War Action (Atlas)

11	Feb 53	5	The Lost Battalion
12	Mar 53	6	War Horse
13	Apr 53	6	The Eagle's Brood

War Adventures (Atlas)

8	Sep 52	5	The Wind-mill

Weird Fantasy (EC)

22	Nov-Dec 53	7	Derelict Ship

Weird Science-Fantasy (EC)

23	Mar 54	6	The Flying Machine
24	Jun 54	6	The Pioneer
25	Sep 54	6	Bellyful

The Westerner Comics (Toytown/Patches)

18	Feb 49	8	Man with the Broken Hand
22	Aug 49	5 2/3	Nuggets Nugent in Double Trouble
23	Oct 49	6 2/3	Magician of Murder Creek
24	Dec 49	7 1/3	The Trail Back
24	Dec 49	5	Nuggets Nugent Goes to Work
26	Apr 50	7	Wild Bill Pecos—Death of Nuggets Nugent
27	Jun 50	6 2/3	Nuggets Nugent in Mystery of the Missing Train

Western Fighters (Hillman)

v1n4	Oct-Nov 48	7	The Iron Octopus
v1n7	Apr-May 49	8	The Dirty Little Coward (pencilling only)
v2n1	Dec 49	8	Bad Soldier
v3n12	Nov 51	7	The Last Gunhand
v4n2	Jan 52	6	The Kid Talks Tough
v4n3	Feb 52	6	The Red Dog Floor-walker

Whiz Comics (Fawcett)

75	Jun 46	?	?
78	Sep 46	?	?

World of Fantasy (Atlas)

9	Dec 57	4	The Phantom of the Farm (51 panels)

REPRINTS OF COMIC STORIES

The EC Horror Library of the 1950's (also titled *Horror Comics of the 1950's*) (Nostalgia Press) hardbound book

	(c) 71	6	Pipe Dream
	(c) 71	8	Master Race

EC Portfolio (Cochran)

2	(c) 72	6	The Flying Machine
4	(c) 73	6	Bellyful

Four-Star Battle Tales (DC)

5	Nov-Dec 73	6	Soldier's Luck

G.I. War Tales (DC)

4	Oct-Nov 73	6	Soldiers of the High Wire

Great Exploits (Red Top) CCA censored.

1	Oct 57	1	cover (blow-up of first panel of "Frog Men Against Belzar")
1	Oct 57	7	Frog Men Against Belzar
1	Oct 57	3	The Terrorist

The Haunt of Horror (Marvel)

3	Sep 74	4	They Wait Below

High Adventure (Red Top)

1	Oct 57	7	Explorer Joe—Eric the Red

Justice League of America (DC)

96	Feb 72	7	Wildcat—The Monkey's Circle

Our Army at War (DC)

201	Jan 69	6	Drummer of Waterloo

Monsters Unleashed (Marvel)

4	Feb 74	5	The Killers

Strange Planets (Super)

18		7	Frog Men Against Belzar
18		3	The Terrorist

Top Adventure Comics (IW)

1		7	Explorer Joe—Eric the Red

Vault of Evil (Marvel)

20	Aug 75	4	The Warning

Note: "The Flying Machine" is scheduled to be reprinted in Harvey Kurtzman's book *Comic Book Art from Argh to Zap*. "Derelict Ship" is scheduled to be reprinted in Volume Two of Nostalgia Press's *The EC Library*. "Master Race" is scheduled to be reprinted in Russ Cochran's *EC Portfolio* #6.

MAGAZINES

This is a reasonably complete listing of the titles of the magazines in which Krigstein's work has appeared. However, the dates and issue numbers are only a representative sampling. Krigstein also had work in other issues of these magazines (with the exception of *The Saturday Evening Post*).

***American Heritage*. Vol. XIII No. 4, Jun 62; Vol. XIII No. 6, Oct 62; et al.**
***Boy's Life*. Jun 61; Jul 61; Oct 61; Aug 62; Nov 65; et al.**
***Conflict* (Ziff-Davis).**
***Fantastic* (Ziff-Davis). Vol. 2 No. 3; Vol. 2 No. 5; et al.**
***Galaxy*. Vol. 9 No. 2, Nov 54; et al.**
***Harpers Magazine*. Dec 60; et al.**
***Hi-Fi Magazine*.**
***The New York Times Magazine*. 9/29/57; 7/7/63; et al.**
***The Saturday Evening Post*. 2/26/66.**
***World-Over* (Jewish Education Committee). 4/12/57; 3/15/57; 5/10/57; 1/15/60; et al.**

BOOKS

This listing is also substantially complete. Krigstein illustrated the cover and/or dust jacket only unless otherwise noted.

Alexander, Lloyd. *Border Hawk August Bondi*. Covenant Books (Farrar, Straus); *with interior illos.*
———. *The Flagship Hope: Aaron Lopez*. Covenant Books (Farrar, Straus); *with interior illos.*
Binns, Archie. *Here Buster: The Sea Pup*. Tab Books.
Bonner, M. G. *How to Play Baseball*. Alfred A. Knopf.

Carson, Robert. *Love Affair*. Henry Holt Co.
Cary, Joyce. *Except the Lord*. Grosset's Universal Library.
———. *Herself Surprised*. Grosset's Universal Library.
———. *The Horse's Mouth*. Grosset's Universal Library.
———. *Not Honor More*. Grosset's Universal Library.
———. *Prisoner of Grace*. Grosset's Universal Library.
———. *To Be a Pilgrim*. Grosset's Universal Library.
Cogswell. *The Advertising Career*. G. P. Putnam's Sons; *with interior illos.*[1]
Colver, Anne. *Borrowed Treasure*. Alfred A. Knopf; *with interior illos.*
Condon, Richard. *The Manchurian Candidate*. McGraw-Hill.
de Wohl, Louis. *St. Helena and the True Cross*. Farrar, Straus; *with interior illos.*
di Prima, Diane, ed. *Various Fables from Various Places*. Capricorn (G. P. Putnam's Sons); *with interior illos.*
Evarts, H. G. *Jedediah Smith, Trail Blazer of the West*. Westerners (Putnam); *with interior illos.*
Flaubert, Gustave. *Madame Bovary*. Dell Publishing Co.
Freier and Lazarus, eds. *Adventures in Modern Literature*. Harcourt, Brace; *interior illos only*.[2]
Lampman, E. S. *Rusty's Space Ship*. Doubleday; *with interior illos.*
Prebble, John. *The Buffalo Soldiers*. Harcourt, Brace.

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1. Krigstein's comment: *It turned out that what I did was actually a satire of the thing. I made an enemy of that editor. They used it, and when it was in publication and distributed he discovered it was a satire, and I never could talk to him after that.*

2. This is a school textbook with illustrations by many artists. Krigstein illustrated "In the Country of the Blind" by H. G. Wells, "The Weighing Machine" by Heinrich Böll and another piece. He considers this among the best of his illustration work.

Rothschild, Sylvia. *The Life and Times of I. L. Peretz.* Covenant Books (Farrar, Strauss); *with interior illos.*

Rowland, F. W. *Eo of the Caves.* Walck; *with interior illos.*

Stockton, Frank R. *Buccaneers and Pirates of our Coast.* Looking Glass Library; *with interior illos.*

Wadleigh, J. W. *The Bitter Passion.* E. P. Dutton and Co.

Annual Report 1957. ABC Paramount.

Jubal and the Prophet. Covenant Books (Farrar, Straus); *with interior illos.*

The Virginian. Distributed in Europe for slow readers in the Army.

RECORD JACKETS

This may be the only one of these listings that is 100% complete. It is also probably the most unavailable material; these records (or at least the Krigstein jackets) have mostly been discontinued years ago. A variety of media was used; pastels, oils, watercolors, casein, even pen and ink and zipatone. Most are in color.

Beethoven. Symphonies No. 9 and 1. Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. Epic SC 6036.

Handel. Concerti Grossi, Op. 6, Nos. 4, 9, and 10. "I Musici." Epic LC 3591.

Milhaud. Les Choephores. Leonard Bernstein, New York Philharmonic. Columbia ML 5796.

Scarlatti. Messa di Santa Cecilia. Utah Symphony Orchestra. Bach Guild/Vanguard BG 621.

Schubert. String Quintet in C Major, Opus 163. The Budapest String Quartet. Columbia ML 5936.

———. The Trout Quintet; Beethoven. Piano Quartet in E-Flat Major. The Budapest String Quartet. Columbia ML 5873.

Wagner. Music from Three Operas. George Szell, The Cleveland Orchestra. Epic LC 3845.

The Feast of Lights Festival. University of Redlands Choir. Columbia LC 3871.

Oscar Wilde's Fairytales. Spoken Arts 785.

Songs of the North and South. Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Columbia ML 5659.

Serenade; Donald Bell sings Schubert and Loewe. Columbia ML 5743. ■■

Below is a cover rough for St. Helena and the True Cross. *The illustration on the previous page is from* Buccaneers and Pirates of Our Coast.

B. Krigstein

an evaluation by Bhob Stewart

This article is reprinted from The EC World Press *#4, August 1954. It was, in part, a response to some less than enthusiastic comments on Krigstein by EC's prolific and distinguished critic Larry Stark, and was originally entitled "B. Krigstein: An Evaluation and Defense." It does not cover all of Krigstein's EC stories because it was written before many of them appeared.*

It was near the end of 1953 that Bernard Krigstein, once president of the Society of Comic Book Illustrators, joined EC. As well as I can make out from correspondence directed both to myself and EC, Krigstein was not received with great applause, brass bands and dancing in the streets by the EC fans. Some have gone so far as to vehemently attack him, claiming that he is ruining the stories that he is assigned to illustrate. No statement could be more untrue, as I hope to show in this article. I think it is time he is given some of the credit that he deserves.

I first became aware of Krigstein's existence in 1952, when he was at Ziff-Davis doing work for *Amazing Adventures*, *Space Busters* and *Space Patrol*. The oldest signed Krigstein work in my files is *Space Busters* #1, dated Spring, 1952. The entire magazine was Krigstein illustrated except for a two page filler. Were it not for the fact that his name is scribbled in the splash panel of page one, I never would have guessed that the work was by Krigstein. His style of 1952 was fairly tight, with an almost total absence of the sketchiness and crosshatching of his latter day work. His male *Space Buster* characters carry a small resemblance to the Krigstein characters of today with their twisted eyebrows and oddly shaped heads. There was nothing very outstanding or appealing about his *Space Buster* style, but it is good work nevertheless, properly drawn in the correct perspectives and proportions.

Amazing Adventures #6, Fall, 1952, had a Krigstein story drawn in a style similar to *Space Busters*, although he had loosened up a little this time, looking somewhat like George Wunder's "Terry and the Pirates." The cover painting of this issue is unsigned, but Krigstein is stamped all over it.

I have the first two *Space Patrols*, with all the "Space Patrol" tales illoed by Krigstein. They were done about the same time as the work mentioned above, but the style is quite different again. The *Space Patrol* work is loose, sprawling, and speedily brush applied. The bold, black brush stripes resemble the work of Milton Caniff.

I also have some Atlas comics from this year which contain work that might be Krigstein, but it's unsigned so I can't say for sure ("The Man Who Couldn't Be Killed," *Spellbound* #6; "The Boy Who Was Afraid," *Strange Tales* #10). These have the same bold brush strokes of the *Space Patrol* work with the addition of a lot of crosshatched pen work.

Krigstein's first EC effort was "Derelict Ship," *Weird Fantasy* #22. His style had changed considerably since the previous year. The new Krigstein is one of thin pen lines with much sketchy pen shading and crosshatching, but not with the sprawling fast applied look of the *Strange Tales* and *Spellbound* work. He frequently backs away for a scene that covers acres of landscape in a single small two by three inch panel, but can abruptly move in for a Jack Webb-type close-up or even an extreme close-up with only a part of the face in the panel. His backgrounds are usually large black and white solid areas, smooth and contrasting. Using solid blacks and whites in the manner that he does, he can get a distinctly modern feeling in his work. The page six splash showing the "wild planning" is outstanding, with the fellow crawling out of his own mouth.

When the two EC science fiction titles combined, the outside appearance of the magazine was not the only thing new. There was also a subtle change in its atmosphere, as if the editors felt that their creation had finally reached maturity. It is therefore fitting that the first *Weird Science-Fantasy* contained a story of classic proportions; Ray Bradbury's "The Flying Machine." This is one of the few times that EC has really done justice to a Bradbury story, partly because the story did not have to be condensed much and also because of the wonderful art. There is an almost perfect affinity between writer and artist; Krigstein has depicted the emotions and moods that Bradbury created with words. At the very outset of the story Krigstein follows right along with Bradbury in setting the mood of the tale. The lead splash shows a vast expanse of land, green and beautiful, as Bradbury might have imagined it, unexploited and untainted by the civilization yet to come. The emperor says the air is sweet, and the sweetness radiates from the scene.

Page four is a nice layout, with two vignettes bordering the middle panel row. The guards' bright uniforms contrast with the whiteness behind them, and the emperor's portrait is clear and concise.

The second panel of the last page displays a subtlety uncommon to comics: "The executioner whirled his silver axe . . ." The noise startles the birds and makes them flutter about in confusion. It's all so logical—the flying birds show us that *after* the executioner whirled his silver axe it *did* reach its destination. In panel six on the same page we get another glimpse of the beauty of ancient China that came so close to annihilation. But the smoke cloud promises us that it will live on because the emperor has done his duty. From the tone of Bradbury's letter in *Weird Science-Fantasy* #25, it sounds as if he were really pleased for the first time.

The Vault of Horror #36 contained another Krigstein Oriental tale, "Pipe Dream," which looks as though Craig wrote specifically for Krigstein after seeing the success of "The Flying Machine." But there is a noticeable difference in the styles of the two stories. His style in "The Flying Machine" was smoothly flowing and permeated with the mood of ancient times. "Pipe Dream," in contrast, is done in a raw sketchy style appropriate for its contemporary characters. The dream sequences of the two killings are imaginatively done, and I like the splash on page five where the first panel showing Chen Chu Yang lying in his opium den fades into his dream in panel two.

"Monotony" in *Crime SuspenStories* #22 is noteworthy for

NO ONE MOVED OR SAID A WORD
OFF WITH HIS HEAD!
THE EXECUTIONER WHIRLED HIS SILVER AX
BURN THE KITE AND THE INVENTOR'S BODY AND BURY THE ASHES TOGETHER
THE GUARDS RETREATED TO OBEY...
THE EMPEROR TURNED TO HIS SERVANT WHO HAD SEEN THE MAN FLYING.
HOLD YOUR TONGUE. IT WAS ALL A DREAM, A MOST SORROWFUL AND BEAUTIFUL DREAM. AND THAT FARMER IN THE DISTANT FIELD WHO ALSO SAW, TELL HIM IT WOULD PAY HIM TO CONSIDER IT ONLY A VISION. IF EVER THE WORD PASSES AROUND, YOU [redacted] THE FARMER DIE WITHIN THE HOUR.
YOU ARE MERCIFUL EMPEROR.
THE OLD MAN SAW, BEYOND THE GARDEN WALL, THE GUARDS BURNING THE BEAUTIFUL MACHINE OF PAPER AND REEDS THAT SMELLED OF MORNING WIND. HE SAW THE DARK SMOKE CLIMB INTO THE SKY
NO, NOT MERCIFUL. NO, ONLY VERY MUCH BEWILDERED AND AFRAID.
HE SAW THE GUARDS DIGGING A TINY PIT WHEREIN TO BURY THE ASHES.
WHAT IS THE LIFE OF ONE MAN AGAINST A MILLION OTHERS? I MUST TAKE SOLACE FROM THAT THOUGHT
HE TOOK THE KEY FROM ITS CHAIN ABOUT HIS NECK AND ONCE MORE WOUND UP THE BEAUTIFUL MINATURE GARDEN. THE TINY GARDEN WHIRRED ITS HIDDEN AND DELICATE MACHINERY AND SET ITSELF INTO MOTION; TINY PEOPLE WALKED IN FORESTS, TINY FOXES LOPED THROUGH SUN-SPECKLED GLADES, AND AMONG THE TINY TREES FLEW LITTLE BITS OF HIGH SONG AND BRIGHT BLUE AND YELLOW COLOR, FLYING, FLYING, FLYING IN THAT SMALL SKY. AND THE EMPEROR SAID, CLOSING HIS EYES..
OH, LOOK AT THE BIRDS, LOOK AT THE BIRDS!
THE END

its first page, which has no splash panel or balloons. Feldstein designed the opening page of the story to get across the precision of the leading character, and Krigstein follows through again. With the help of Zipatone he gets the idea over in a subtle and simple way: *each panel is perfectly and precisely balanced.* In some cases it appears that balancing the scene would be impossible if drawn realistically, but this doesn't faze Krigstein! In the use of Zipatone he *departs from reality* to show the monotony and precision. In panel three the Zipatone strip across the top balances perfectly with the desk at the bottom. In panel five Milton is framed precisely within the Zipatone and it overlaps in one corner to balance precisely with the desk in the opposite corner. In panel six Milton sits precisely at his precisely cleaned desk precisely in line with the window. The Zipatone in panel two is cut precisely to be precisely in line with the Zipatone in the panel below it. To sum up the whole page . . . it is precise.

The books in the last panel of the page seem out of place, though. One would think that Milton would have arranged them more precisely. But this is quibbling. The crosshatching on page two is disturbing too. It distracts from the sterile feeling established on page one. I would have been content if Krigstein had omitted his crosshatching here.

Krigstein put real humor into his cartoons in "From Eternity Back to Here," in *Mad* #12, using the traditional and classical approach to caricature rather than the "*Mad* style." The drawing of Fatso coming out of The New Senate Club is so perfect and right that I laugh each time I see it. He has forsaken facial expression on his characters so that he can keep the likeness, but in so doing he has made them seem to lose that breath of life that Woody takes such pains to put into his characters. However, perhaps Prew is purposely expressionless.

In panel two on page one Prew is talking to Warden but facing the reader so that we can see the caricature. Krigstein has emphasized the caricatures, calling attention to them at the expense of the story. I don't quite get the swaying bodies either. This looks rather abnormal . . . except for page two, panel four, where Prew is playing his horn in the exact swaying position that he did in the bar scene of the motion picture. His pants are even wrinkled in the same way. There are some dubious attempts at humor—Prew lying on his side in panel two, page two, and that long neck in panel one, page four.

But there are many other points worth praising—the use of the now familiar photograph of Kerr and Lancaster (probably

FOR A LONG WHILE, THERE WASN'T A SOUL IN SIGHT. REMEMBER? AND THEN YOU SAW THE HUNCHED LITTLE FIGURE APPEAR OUT OF THE MISTY GLOOM AHEAD. HE DRAGGED TOWARD YOU... MISSHAPEN... BENT, GNARLED...
SOMEHOW, INSTINCTIVELY, YOU TRIED TO AVOID HIM, BUT HE TURNED TOWARD YOU WITH A CROOKED, LEERING SMILE. YOU WANTED TO HURRY PAST HIM BUT HE PUT OUT HIS HAND...
I BEG YOUR PARDON! DO YOU HAVE A MATCH, PLEASE?
OH. SURE
DON'T YOU REMEMBER FUMBLING THROUGH YOUR POCKETS, TAKING OUT THE BOOK OF MATCHES, LIGHTING ONE, AND CUPPING YOUR HANDS AROUND THE DANCING FLAME AS HE STABBED HIS EVIL-SMELLING CIGAR INTO IT. .
HERE YOU ARE .
MMMMM'
AS HE DREW HIS HEAD BACK, YOU DID NOT TOSS THE MATCH TO THE WET SIDEWALK. YOU HELD IT THERE... THE FLAME CRAWLING DOWN THE WAXED CARDBOARD SHAFT. HIS EYES HIS EYES BLAZED AT YOU IN THE ORANGE GLARE... BLAZED WITH A PECULIAR INTENSITY AND HIS VOICE WAS SOFT AND COMPELLING
WAIT! DON'T MOVE! LOOK AT ME! LOOK INTO MY EYES!
HUH?
HOW COULD YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN THOSE EYES? OWL EYES. . EVIL EYES. THAT SEEMED TO LOOM LARGER AND LARGER... BURNING, BURNING EYES...
LOOK INTO MY EYES! DON'T TURN AWAY. YOU CAN'T TURN AWAY. LOOK DEEP! DEEPER...
AND THE NIGHT SPUN AROUND YOU. THE MIST SWIRLED AND EDDIED AS, IN YOUR BRAIN, A MENTAL FOG NOW SWIRLED AND EDDIED. YOUR MIND SANK INTO A SPIRALING POOL... DOWN... DOWN. DESPERATELY YOU TRIED TO SHIELD YOURSELF FROM THOSE FIERCE COMPELLING EYES...
TAKE YOUR HANDS AWAY! PUT THEM DOWN! IT'S USELESS NOW... USELESS TO TRY TO FIGHT.
YOU DROPPED YOUR HANDS... OBEDIENTLY LIKE A STUPID CHILD. HE WAS RIGHT, IT WAS NO USE TRYING TO FIGHT NOW. IT WAS TOO LATE YOU WERE IN HIS POWER... HELPLESS. UNDER HIS SPELL...
CHILD'S PLAY! ON STAGE, I AM KNOWN AS 'PROFESSOR GALBY,' THE WORLD'S GREATEST HYPNOTIST.' NOW LISTEN CAREFULLY. I PICKED THE FIRST PERSON WHO CAME ALONG FOR THIS. YOU SHALL PERFORM, SHALL WE SAY, AN ERRAND FOR ME! YOU SHALL COMMIT MURDER FOR ME!
© 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines.

Kurtzman's idea), the excess of hands in panel four, and the angle on the row of windows in the lunch room exactly as seen in the movie. Krigstein's *Mad* art has an undefinable and distinctive appeal all its own.

"You, Murderer," in *Shock SuspenStories* #14, opens with another masterful splash. Using spottily applied crosshatch, Krigstein gives us a well drawn scene of a foggy and deserted slum area, immediately setting the mood for horror to come. He does as well as possible in drawing scenes which *you* are witnessing since *you* are a character in the story. It can't help but be a little unnatural, just as it has been when the idea has been tried in motion pictures (the subjective camera looking through the eyes of the company president in *Executive Suite*, for example).

The hypnotizing scenes on page two are superb. You can look at panel five steadily and, by God, it feels like you *are* being hypnotized! It seems as if you could just let your brain fall into his eyes. Then, in the next panel, the hypnotist's face is horribly distorted as you lose control of your thoughts. The last panel on page two shows the only thing you are conscious of—his eyes. The possibility of being hypnotized by drawings seems unlikely, but Krigstein came damn close to it here!

"The Pioneer" (*Weird Science-Fantasy* #24), "The Bath" (*Tales from the Crypt* #42) and "Prairie Schooner" (*Tales from the Crypt* #40) are all competently illustrated, with the latter story a prime example of the way Krigstein heightens the drama by concentrating his effects, alternating tension and release.

Crime SuspenStories #24, with "More Blessed to Give . . .," reveals a number of examples of an interesting Krigstein trademark—that of tilting a character's head so that the face is lowered and only partly visible. It's a perfectly natural position, but one that the other artists always leave to Krigstein.

The imaginative work on "Bellyful," in *Weird Science-Fantasy* #25, makes this old house plot a potent experience. The spaceship scenes in CrafTint and Zipatone are nicely done, and that monster really looks like one helluva beast in the scene where you can compare his size with the men beneath him.

In *Vault of Horror* #38 Krigstein is back with some new innovations in "The Catacombs." Most noteworthy is the absence of balloons in some of the panels; instead, speech is set in quotation marks above the panel. Since *Flash Gordon* switched to balloons only Hal Foster's *Prince Valiant* remains as an example of the balloonless strip. It's not new to comics, but it's new to EC. However, when the speech floats alone with no balloon stem showing its origin, it seems unnatural, as if the speaker never really said the words at all.

Zipatone is used throughout the story, not just for shading, but holding as much importance in the art as the India ink. The first panel on page three and the CinemaScope-type panel on the first page use the Zipatone to particular advantage. Krigstein manipulates it skillfully during the story to give the feeling of gloom, darkness and depth—a feeling that you could walk into the panel and hear your echo far back in the catacombs.

And that is the total amount of work that Bernie Krigstein has done for EC at this writing . . .

His work is unique in that he uses different styles for different types of stories . . . a crisp modern style for a modern story like "More Blessed to Give . . .," rough scratchwork suitable for the modern Chinatown of "Pipe Dream," smooth pseudo-Oriental art to match Bradbury's "The Flying Machine." And Krigstein knows just how much to vary his style to produce the effect he wants to create. He's already shown us about four or five different styles which, it would seem, are enough to indicate the great versatility this artist has, but perhaps he has even *more* saved up for some odd types of stories yet to spawn from Feldstein's fertile brain.

There has never been a comic artist quite like Krigstein. He's not content to just plod along; he is constantly experimenting with new techniques and ideas. It won't be surprising if he turns up one day with a story illustrated in abstract expressionism.

And I'm worried. If you anti-Krigstein Fan-Addicts continue to write berating letters to EC about Krigstein, he might be relieved of his duties there, and he'll have to return to crap-comics that will never have a story of good enough quality to be worth gracing with Krigstein work. Those who appreciate his magnificent talent can only sit back and hope that the others will develop an appreciation of Krigstein, and hope that Gaines and Feldstein, recognizing a great art talent, keep him on the staff.

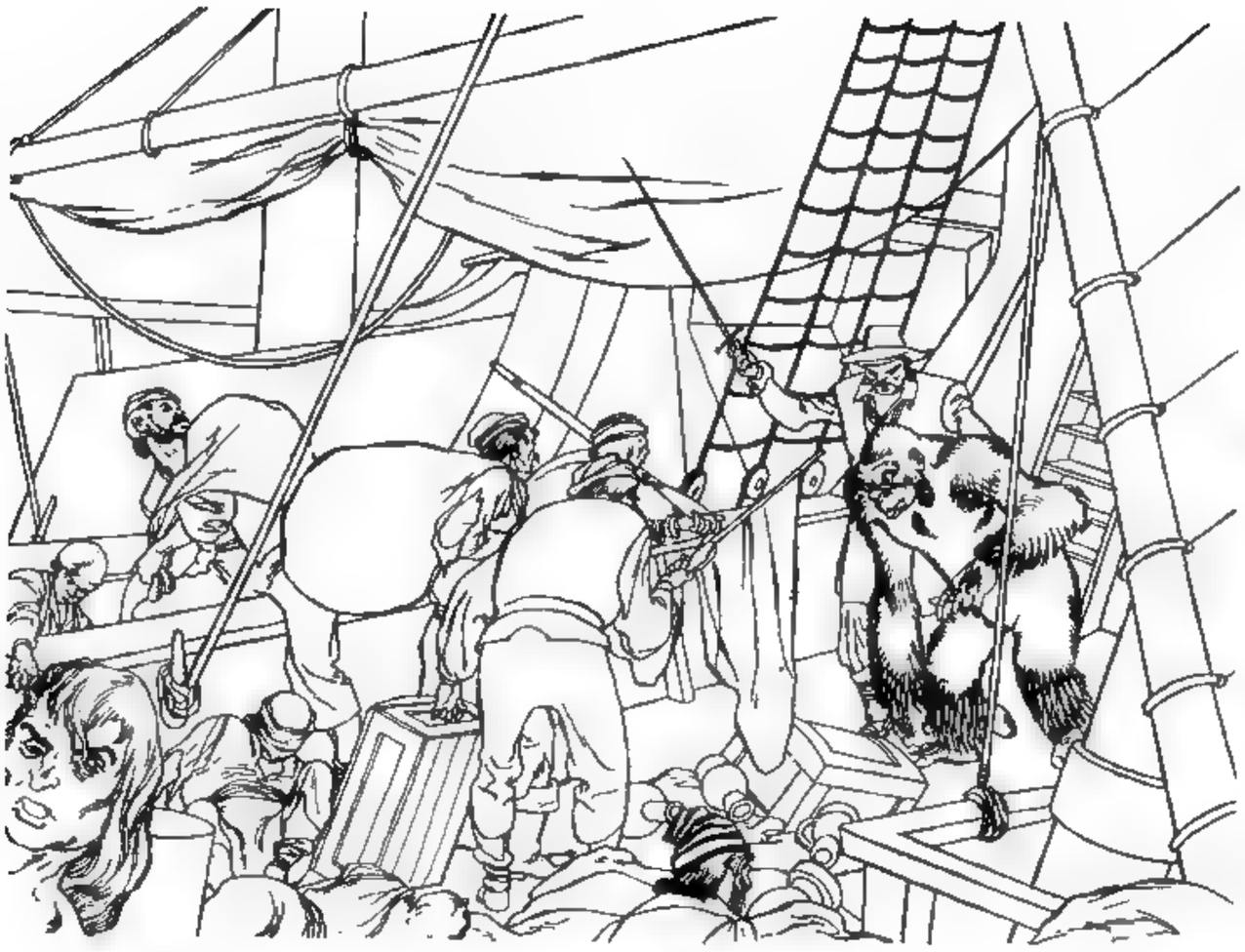
Like every new thing that comes along that he doesn't like, Stark says about Krigstein, "Give him six months." But I don't see why . . . he'll be just as good then as he is now. ■■

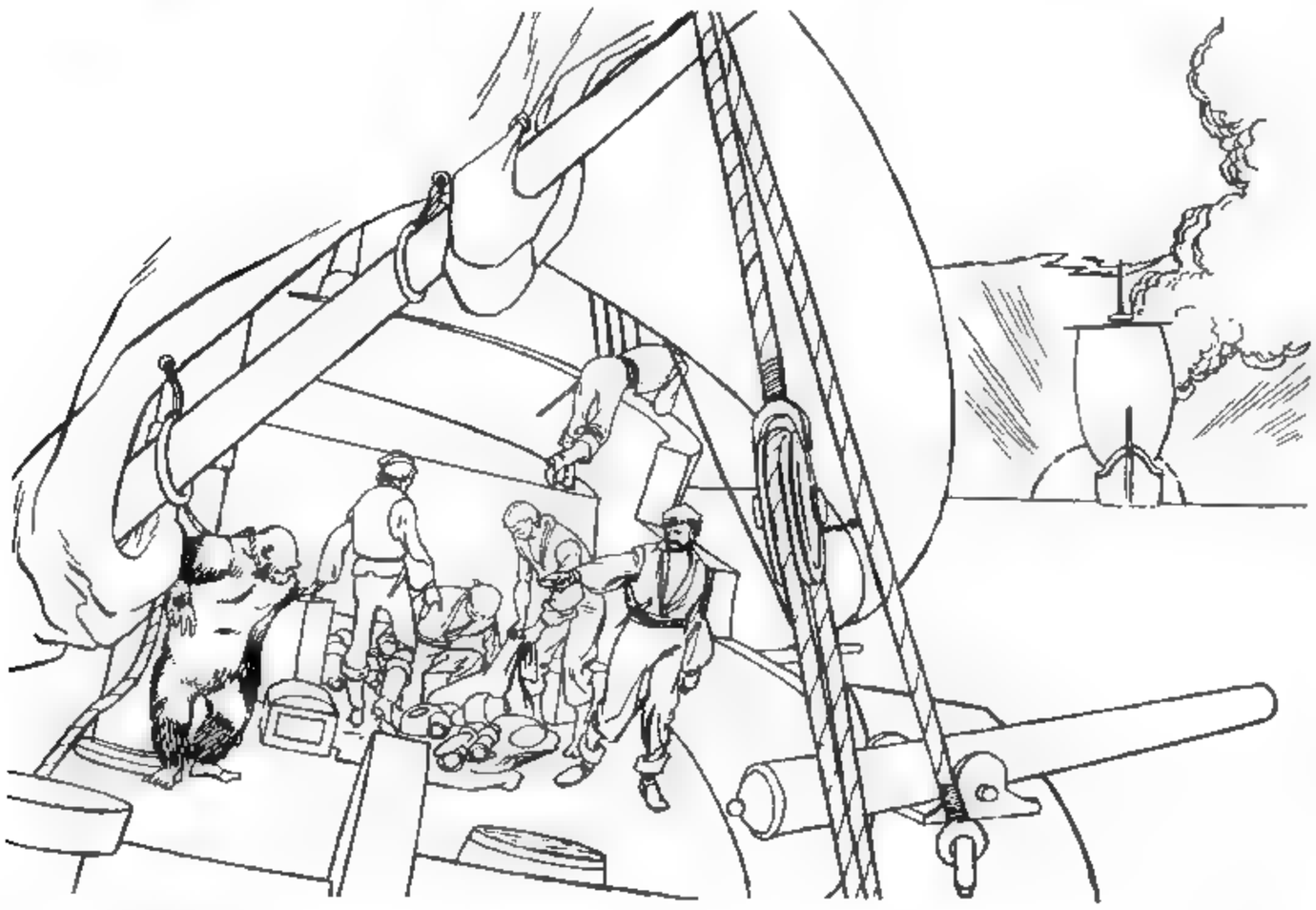
MOLLY'S NEXT PURCHASE WAS A BOTTLE OF WHISKEY AT THE LOCAL LIQUOR STORE..
WOULD YOU WRAP IT AS A GIFT? IT'S MY HUSBAND'S FAVORITE BRAND AND I'D LIKE TO GIVE IT TO HIM FOR OUR ANNIVERSARY!
AS YOU WISH, MRS TALBOT!
STANLEY STOPPED OFF AT THE LOCAL BAKERY FOR HIS NEXT PURCHASE
I'D LIKE TO ORDER AN ANNIVERSARY CAKE... TO SURPRISE MY WIFE ONE LIKE LET ME SEE LIKE THAT ONE! THAT'S BIG ENOUGH!
OF COURSE, MR TALBOT!
MOLLY BROUGHT THE BOTTLE OF WHISKEY AND THE RAT POISON HOME THAT EVENING AND HID THEM CAREFULLY IN HER ROOM.. DOWN DEEP IN A LINGERIE-FILLED DRESSER DRAWER STANLEY NEVER WENT THROUGH HER LINGERIE DRAWER, SO THE BOTTLE AND THE POISON WOULD BE SAFE UNTIL SHE COULD GET TO THEM
STANLEY, MEANWHILE, WAS HIDING THE BOMB AND THE CAKE IN THE GARAGE. IT WAS COLD IN THE GARAGE AND THE CAKE WOULD KEEP WELL THERE. MOLLY NEVER CAME TO THE GARAGE, SO THE BOMB AND THE CAKE WOULD BE SAFE UNTIL HE COULD GET TO THEM
DOM-DA-DUM-DEE
DEE-DA-DEE-DUM
THEN MOLLY WENT INTO THE KITCHEN AND STARTED PREPARING DINNER AS USUAL..
AND STANLEY CAME IN THE FRONT DOOR AS IF HE WERE COMING HOME FROM WORK AS USUAL. .
HELLO! I'M HOME!
SO WHAT DO YOU WANT A FANFARE?
2
"More Blessed to Give. . ." © 1975 by Wm. M. Gaines

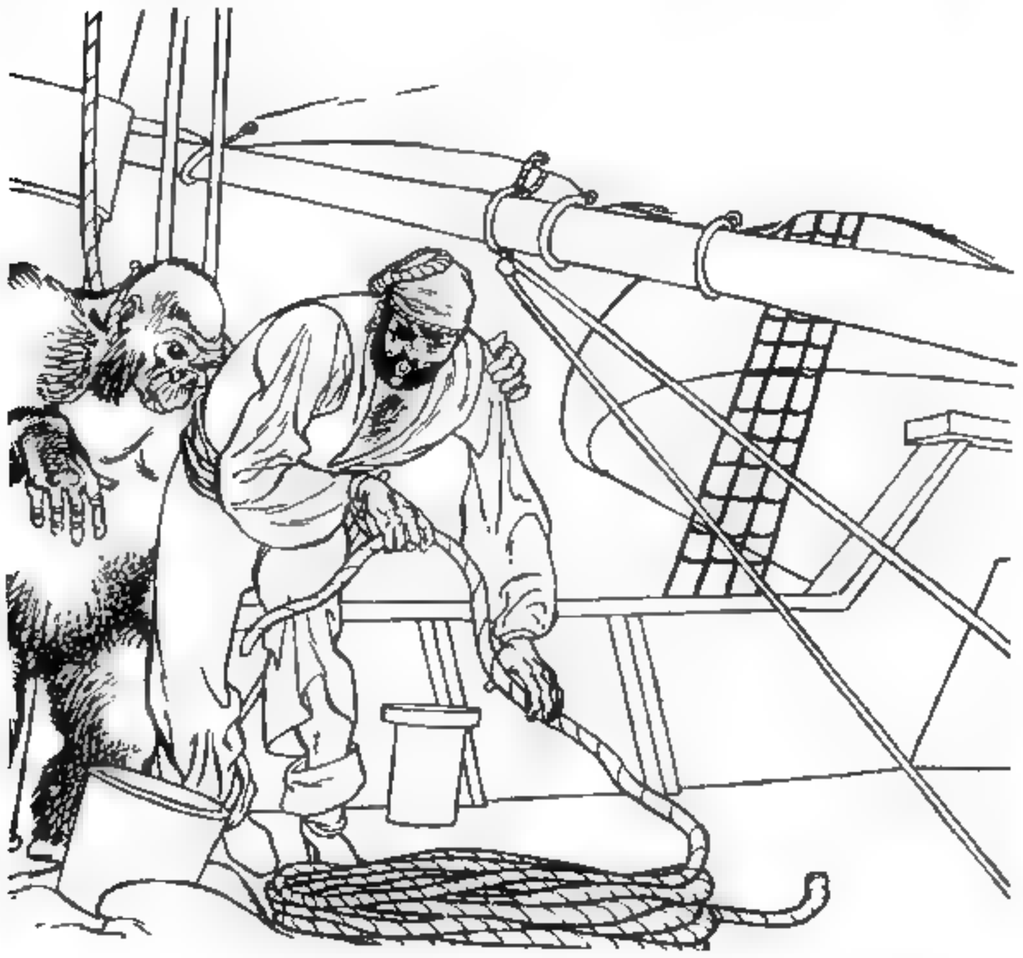
BELLYFUL

THE SHIP STREAKED SILENTLY ACROSS THE ENDLESS ABYSS OF SPACE AND, WITHIN ITS INSTRUMENT-LINED BELLY, THE MEN SAT OR MOVED ABOUT..OR SLEPT.. OR TALKED OR WERE SILENT.. OR LAUGHED OR SOMETIMES EVEN CRIED
WELL, WHAT'S EATING YOU, DONALDS?
I DON'T KNOW! I SOB I'M SICK, I GUESS! IT'S BEEN GETTING WORSE AND WORSE EVER SINCE WE LEFT THAT LAST PLANET WE CHARTED!
HA! DONALDS SAYS HE'S SICK! THAT'S A LAUGH!
B. Krigstein

AW, LAY OFF HIM, GELSTON! YOU CAN SEE HE'S DOUBLING UP IN PAIN WHERE DOES IT HURT, KID? DOWN LOW? MAYBE IT'S APPENDICITIS?!
DOC STATLAND'LL LOVE THAT! HE SAYS WE'RE SO DISGUSTINGLY HEALTHY, HE'S GOT NOTHING TO DO BUT SHOOT WHITE MICE FULL OF BACTERIA SAMPLES HE'S PICKED UP..
NO! IT'S IT'S NOT MY APPENDIX, MILLER IT IT COULDN'T BE! I HAD THAT OUT WHEN I WAS A KID!
WELL, LOOK, DONALDS! THERE'S NO USE YOU SUFFERING LIKE THIS. WHY NOT GO SEE THE DOC?
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH HIM, MILLER! HE EATS LIKE A HORSE...
1
1975 by Wm. M. Gaines.







QUABROT ? editor's o comments

Although it may appear at first glance that "The EC Fanzines" series has been set aside because of this special issue, actually a large part of the issue has been reprinted from early fanzines.

In my chronology, *Talk with B. Krigstein* was the last publication that could be considered part of the original EC fandom. At that, it already overlapped the first publications of the next fandom: *Alter Ego, The Rocket's Blast, On the Drawing Board, Comic Art,* et al. At the time I was unfamiliar with these other publications, with the exception of *Comic Art.* When Bhob Stewart and I first thought of doing an interview with Krigstein, we planned to send it to *Comic Art,* although its editors Don and Maggie Thompson probably never knew that. My own recollection is that we did know that there was some resurgence of interest in comics, partly through the response that the "All in Color for a Dime" series in *Xero* was getting (Bhob being art editor of *Xero* and co-editor of its final issue).

However, I doubt that this general revival of interest had as much to do with our decision to interview Krigstein as the discussions that Bhob and I had at that time about EC and the art of comics. We each thought that one of the high points of both was the work of Bernie Krigstein.

At the time EC seemed much further in the dark past than it does now. Seven years had elapsed since the last EC comic had appeared. Would an artist who had gone on to other things still want to talk about those days? We soon found out that the answer was yes.

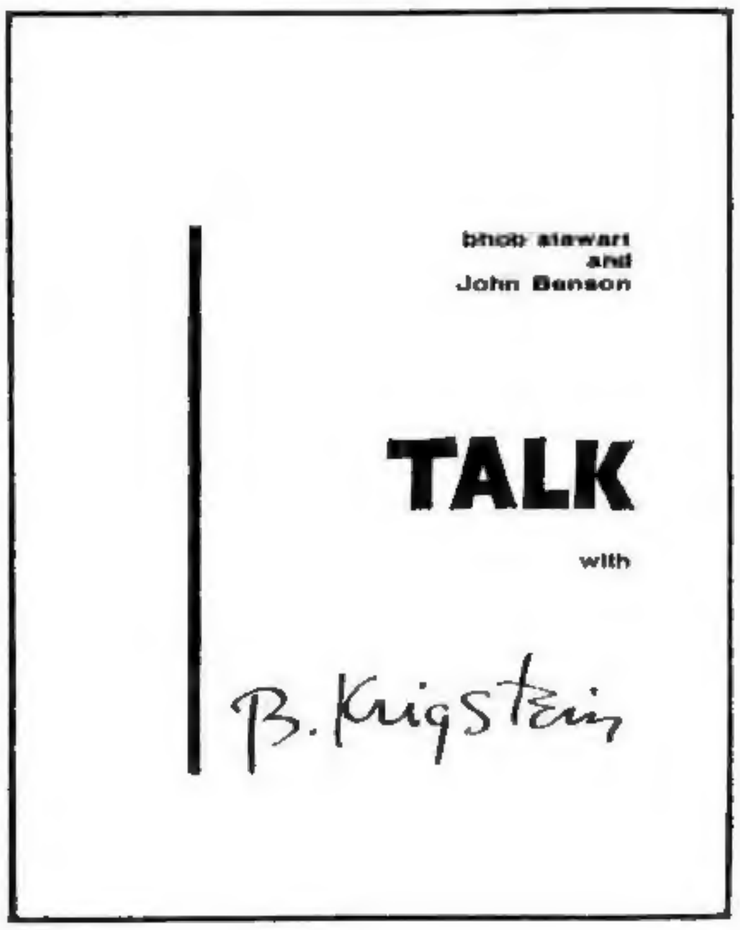
The evening before the interview we went over to Larry Ivie's to look over Krigstein's stories, which neither Bhob nor I had seen for several years. We rekindled the excitement we had felt when we first read his work, rediscovering the revolutionary concepts he had developed. Larry pooh-poohed our excitement and suggested that Krigstein had subdivided and repeated panels because it was easier to draw that way.

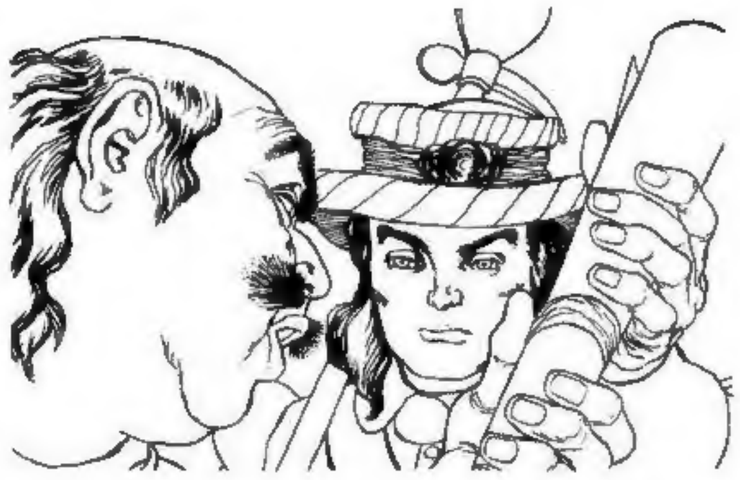
The next night, as we lugged Larry's tape recorder on the long ride out to Krigstein's, I felt a tension. I was certain that I saw well thought out concepts in Krigstein's work; everything in the stories indicated that we would be meeting a man who cared a great deal about his work and who would be able to articulate all these concepts. On the other hand, although I had met other comic artists who loved their work, I had never met any who could talk about it the way I hoped Krigstein would. What if Larry were right?

Almost immediately after we arrived any such fears disappeared. Krigstein, of course, was getting face-to-face feedback for practically the first time, and we were talking to a person whose work we admired. But I've been in similar situations which were awkward because my concept of what was interesting in the artist's work was not at all shared by the artist. With Krigstein we found that we were talking the same language. Beyond that, we found that Krigstein and we all had thought of the same projects he might have taken on, and that his work had the same exterior associations for each of us. In fact, Krigstein is still the only comics artist I know of who might mention Dovzhenko or be able to recognize a Paul Cadmus painting from a brief description.

Because the conversational aspect of our visit, which revealed these discoveries of common interests, seemed important to us, we left much of it in and labeled the result "Talk with." In the version appearing in this issue the more inconsequential conversation has been excluded, so it has been redubbed "An Interview."

Talk with B. Krigstein was mimeographed, with an offset back cover, in an edition of 200 copies. This was double the print run of most fanzines then (hand collating is dull work); I don't remember just why we chose to do this. The only advertising we did was a flyer





sent out with *Xero.* Most copies were given away to people we thought would be interested. A portion of the interview was translated and printed without our permission in the French comics magazine *Giff-Wiff.*

Krigstein was unique among comics artists I have interviewed in that he made almost no changes in the transcript. Perhaps this was in part due to the fact that he was no longer in the field and therefore didn't have to worry about how his comments might affect a future assignment. He did express reluctance about some passages where it might seem that he was pontificating or lecturing. I felt that what he was saying was important, and convinced him to leave them in.

To my knowledge, the only other EC fanzine to have serious coverage of Krigstein's work was George Jennings' *The EC World Press* (changed to *The EC Press* by the fourth issue, actually), which featured the six page evaluation by Bhob Stewart that is reprinted in this issue.

Larry Stark was the first to give EC serious and mature criticism, and his long story-by-story critiques are well known, although not well read due to their unavailability. Stewart was less prolific; the Krigstein piece and a long similar essay on *Mad* in *Hoohah* were his only two extended thematic pieces. Perhaps Larry wrote with more professional skill (after all, he had just graduated from Rutgers and Bhob was still in high school), but I liked Bhob's approach better. Larry concentrated most of his analysis on the literary aspects of a story. Bhob looked at the visuals—not just as illustrations, but examining how they were used to tell the story. His observations on Krigstein hold up well after 20 years.

The "Master Race" piece in this issue started out to be a reprint also. Art Spiegelman had written a college paper analysing the story in 1968, which was subsequently printed in the Harpur College literary magazine. I asked Art if I could reprint it, and he made additions and revisions to it in note form and asked me to shape up a final draft. I became very involved and completely rewrote it. I then sent it to David Kasakove, who did another rewrite which doubled the length of the manuscript. I took his version and turned out two more complete drafts. The final version is so different from the first that it could hardly be called a reprint.

We want to emphasize that each reader must go to Krigstein's story

directly to discover what is there. Perhaps the reader's discoveries will be different than ours. When Krigstein learned that an essay on "Master Race" would be in this issue, he was concerned that a written analysis of the story might misdirect the reader. In general we share this concern.

An excellent example of what I'm talking about is film critic Pauline Kael's booklength essay *Raising Kane*, a critical analysis of *Citizen Kane* and a history of the writing of its screenplay. Ms. Kael handles prose brilliantly and develops a number of ingenious esthetic theories. However, she interprets movies from a very literary viewpoint, and seems blind to the extremely important visual and theatrical aspects of the medium. Her book gives the unmistakable impression that the screenplay is *the* essential creative unit of a film, and that director Orson Welles had little responsibility for the screenplay of *Citizen Kane*.

Her conclusions as to who wrote the screenplay are debatable, but the real point is that the reader of *Raising Kane* may unconsciously accept Ms. Kael's unstated assumptions. He will undoubtedly know a lot more about *Citizen Kane* after reading her book, but his knowledge will all be aimed in the wrong direction. In reading our essay on "Master Race" the reader should be just as wary of accepting carte blanche our critical focus.

Krigstein worked with a very definite awareness that his work would be printed with color, and one should bear this in mind when studying the reproductions in this issue. "Master Race" has been reprinted in *The EC Horror Library of the 1950's* (Nostalgia Press), which utilized the excellent color guides that Marie Severin did for the original comic. Unfortunately, the book, although printed beautifully, suffers from abominable color separations. And though the separations in the comic are excellent, the printing is poor and off-register in most copies.

If you want to see "Master Race" flawlessly reproduced from the original art, with no color, be sure to get *EC Portfolio* #6 from Russ Cochran when it comes out. Cochran's portfolio series are 11 x 16 inch books beautifully printed on heavy stock. Reading them is practically the equivalent of reading from the original art. Two other Krigstein stories have already appeared in earlier portfolios; "The Flying Machine" in #2 (out of print), and "Bellyful" in #4. Each of these beautifully produced portfolios contain about five EC stories. At the present time 3, 4 and 5 are available at $20 each, or all three for $50. Order from Russ Cochran, Box 347, West Plains, Mo. 65775.

Finally, a word should be said about the Krigstein bibliography. Although this issue of *Squa Tront* will hopefully raise the level of interest in Krigstein's work, it would be depressing if it produced a cult that collected *all* Krigstein comics without regard to their quality. Because a checklist is a signal to a collector, I debated whether to run this feature. But in the final analysis I don't think Krigstein's work appeals greatly to the collector type. I hope not.

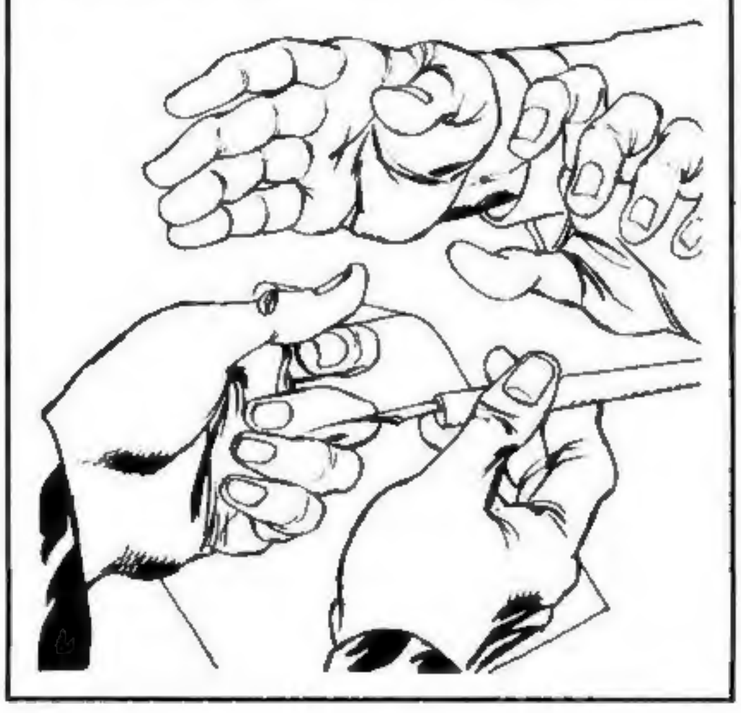
MORE PLUGS

The beautiful signed and numbered Kurtzman print that we mentioned last issue is still available from Bill Peckmann, Room 403, 65 East 55th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022 for $5 (sent first class in a sturdy mailing tube).

Even though it has nothing to do with EC, we want to mention a new underground comics magazine called *Arcade*, which features the work of Robert Crumb, Art Spiegelman, Gilbert Shelton, Jay Lynch, Justin Green, Spain, Jim Osborne, Bill Griffith and others. It's proof that the best of the underground cartoonists are still flourishing and better than ever. Highly recommended. It is a quarterly book in an 8½ x 11 inch format; two issues are out and a third is on the way at this writing. Cost: $1.25 per copy (plus 25¢ shipping), from The Print Mint, Inc., 830 Folger Avenue, Berkeley, Calif. 94710.

—John Benson

LETTERS



The following letter of comment was written shortly after the original publication of the Krigstein interview.

October 2, 1963

Krigstein calling Williamson "too artistic" is rather strange, because I can visualize any number of unimaginative hacks that work in the comics field applying that label to Krigstein. And Bernie is artistic, but there's no "too" about it. As a matter of fact, I don't think there's any such thing as being "*too* artistic." Williamson, I think, did not work along the lines of fine art, but was more of an illustrator, his main points being style, good anatomy, and good action. A man can master all these elements and still not be a good artist. Not that I'm saying anything against Williamson.

I'm sorry that you didn't ask Krigstein about his work for *Boy's Life*. Of all of Krigstein's work that I've seen, I would consider this his only failure. They were blurry wash paintings that looked just like hash. I'm wondering what happened to him there; whether he just wasn't interested, or working on a new angle that never got off the ground.

It's a funny thing, but the story that Krigstein is most disenchanted with, *87th Precinct*, occupies a warm spot in my heart (that may sound overly sentimental). I think there Krigstein did do some good caricature, had about two pages reminiscent of his old EC tone-sheet work, and made the story come to life. Of course, I was well aware that he was Putting Us On with the lightning in the guy's head and all, but that added to my total appreciation. I also liked the story, with that hawk seemingly the symbol of something... and with dialogue like, "Yes... right through the heart... the heart... the beat of the disease called love," and, "But when I look at the likes of you and the horrors of this world I resent neither losing my sight or my life! In losing me the world loses one of its great artists. But the world doesn't need any great artists, does it?" and, "Don't cry, Teddy! In death I may develop an even greater mode of vision." The whole thing seemed to have a mystical quality, but I've read similar things from Dell, probably written by the same writer, and they've never come to life, having a confused sort of feeling. Krigstein *did* add greatly to the story, and I wish he had continued with this series. Even if the story was "absurd," it was a refreshing takeoff from the monotonous slop that goes into most comic book plots today.

Krigstein's remarks about visual arts being rated lower than the literary arts brings to mind F. M. Busby's remark to me that "I can't comment on your art—I'm verbally oriented." The implication is, I think, that he lacks the artist's jargon to describe art, but I think it goes much deeper than that. The present reason for visual arts being rated on a lower scale than the written word is the concern within an industrial society with communication; because in a mechanized state the individual feels himself to be apart, or *alienated*, from other people, his job, the world, etc. And the written word *is* a more intimate form of communication than art. I suspect that more primitive countries place a greater emphasis on art that they can see or hear. It is significant that the Renaissance produced greater artists than writers, for even in those times illiteracy was quite high.

—Steve Stiles
New York

Lastly is this comment, penned just after the writer had learned that this issue of Squa Tront *would be an all Krigstein issue.*

November 20, 1974

I will make it a point not to include this issue as part of my life.

—Gary Arlington
San Francisco

B. KRIGSTEIN